

Safety and Risk Mitigation Organization (SRMO)



The State of Human Rights Defenders in Afghanistan Two-Year Annual Report 2018-2019



Report Author: Sonya Merkova, SRMO Co-Founder

Co-Author: Zamarey Faqiri, SRMO Director

Contributor: Horia Mosadiq, SRMO Founder

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Contacts

Zamarey Faqiri, Director of Safety and Risk Mitigation Organization (SRMO)

srmo.afg@gmail.com & Info.SRMO@protonmail.com

Website: www.srmo.org

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About the Authors:

Sonya Merkova is one of the co-founders of SRMO. She has over 12 years of experience in human rights, including in protection of human rights defenders in Afghanistan. Ms Merkova previously served with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and worked for eight years with the Afghanistan and Pakistan Team at Amnesty International, and with CIVICUS. She regularly documented violations against human rights defenders in Afghanistan, conducted needs assessments for Women Human Rights Defenders at risk, and provided protection, including emergency evacuation for HRDs at risk in Afghanistan. She holds an LLM in International Crimes and Justice and a Master in Human Rights.

Zamarey Faqiri is the Director and one of the co-founders of SRMO. Mr Faqiri has more than 19 years of working experience in the security and safety management of NGOs and human rights defenders (HRDs) in Afghanistan. Since 2015, Mr Faqiri has been assisting and working closely with HRDs in Afghanistan, providing regular safety and hostile environment trainings for HRDs, providing advice on safety arrangement for HRDs offices, managing an Early Warning System for HRDs and responding to emergency protection needs of HRDs at risk. Previously, he held senior positions with the Afghanistan NGOs Safety Office (ANSO/ INSO) and the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) in Afghanistan where he has been dealing on daily bases with assessing and managing threats, security and safety of NGOs and UN staff working in Afghanistan as well as of the UN properties.

Horia Mosadiq is one of the SRMO founders and a member of the SRMO Board responsible for Donor Liaison and emergency assistance for HRDs and WHRDs. Ms Mosadiq is a well-known and widely respected human rights defender from Afghanistan with more than 25 years of work experience in defending and promoting human rights and women's human rights in Afghanistan. She has an extensive experience in responding to cases of HRDs at risk in Afghanistan and has provided human rights and safety training for NGOs and civil society organizations around Afghanistan. Previously she worked as the Afghanistan Researcher with Amnesty International and conducted in depth research and analyses of the situation of HRDs and WHRDs in Afghanistan. In addition, Horia worked with the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and was a Managing Director of a human rights organization in Afghanistan, the Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC).

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About the Safety and Risk Mitigation Organization (SRMO)

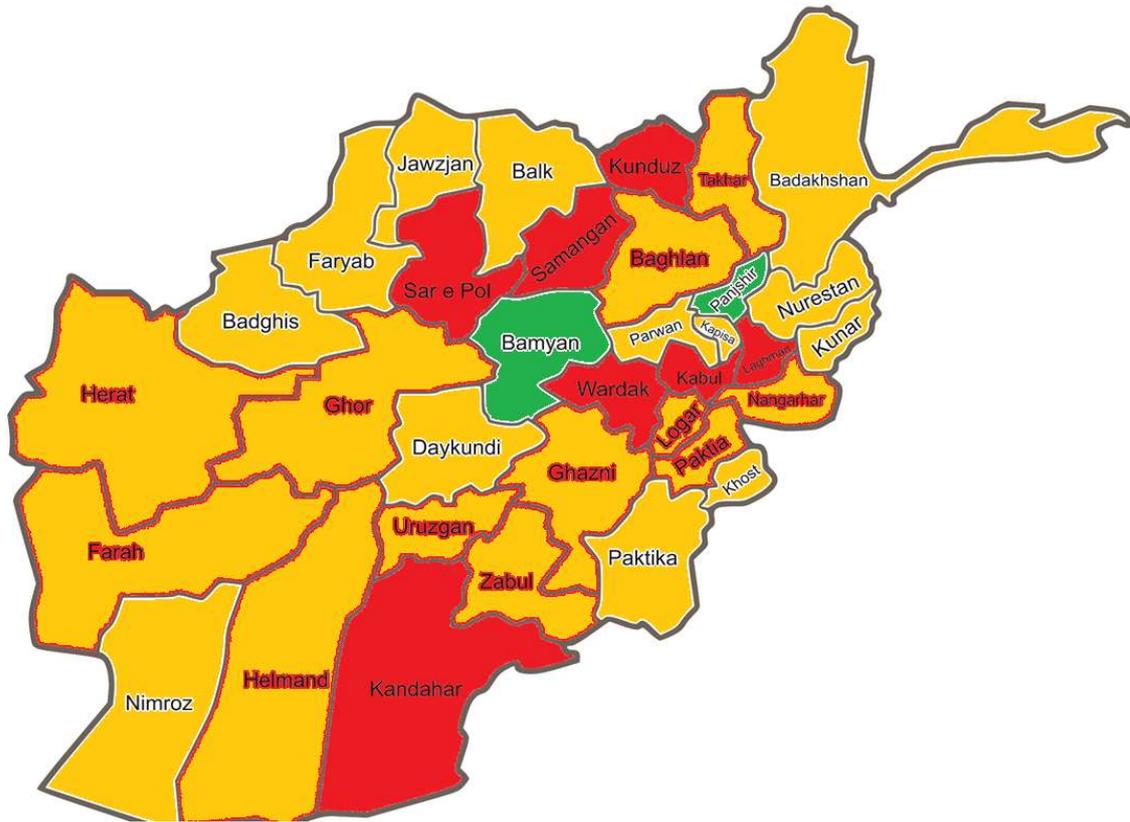
The Safety and Risk Mitigation Organization (SRMO) is an Afghan-led NGO, established in April 2013 as a response to growing threats against Afghan HRDs to provide protection to grassroots Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) at risk in Afghanistan. The SRMO's main objective is to develop and provide local protection solutions to HRDs in Afghanistan and to empower HRDs so they can safely continue their crucial work.

SRMO was established in a response to the growing threats against Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in Afghanistan and the lack of a mechanism to provide protection to this vulnerable group. SRMO is mandated to provide safety and protection for HRDs and WHRDs in Afghanistan through capacity building (including safety and risk mitigation training, digital and cyber security, first aid and stress management training), emergency grants, legal aid, emergency relocation, emergency housing, safety and risk mitigation advisory, site security surveys for accommodations and offices of HRDs and WHRDs, training for unarmed security guards, training for drivers on anti-hijacking and travelling to insecure or hostile environment areas. Since 2017, SRMO is also running an Early Warning System providing regular and vital security information and mitigation advice to more than 500 HRDs and WHRDs in the provinces across Afghanistan.

SRMO is having access to all over Afghanistan through its strong network of HRDs/ WHRDs, members of Civil Society and Media workers and has volunteer provincial focal points who are playing a vital role in accessibility and information sharing on general human rights situation in Afghanistan.

SRMO focuses its assistance on the local and grassroots' HRDs and WHRDs, recognising their utmost vulnerability as being at the frontline of defending human rights. Especially SRMO focuses its resources on helping HRDS and WHRDs operating in the insecure and rural areas where there is a limited presence and assistance by NGOs and international organisations, and the HRDs have very limited or no links and contacts with international organizations or diplomatic and UN missions for protection.

Map of Afghanistan showing the provinces where cases of attacks against HRDs/WHRDs and civil society activists (CSAs) were documented by SRMO during the period 2018-2019:



Red: Provinces where HRDs were killed in 2018 and 2019

Yellow: Provinces where HRDs were subjected to other attacks, threats and intimidation, and relocated by SRMO.

Green: Provinces where no HRDs attacks have been reported to SRMO.

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1. Summary of the State of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in 2018 and 2019

The human rights situation and the safety of human rights defenders (HRDs) in Afghanistan continue to deteriorate. The lack of dedicated government protection measures for HRDs, the intensifying armed conflict and deepening political instability contributed to the increase of violence against individuals speaking out and defending human rights.

This report examines the patterns of violations against the human rights defenders community in Afghanistan in the period between 2018 and 2019.

In 2019, SRMO recorded almost 50 percent increase of attacks and human rights violations against HRDs and civil society activists (CSAs) from across Afghanistan, compared to 2018. HRDs, women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and CSAs, have been increasingly subjected to targeted killings, violent attacks, threats and intimidation, kidnappings, arbitrary detention and judicial harassments. SRMO recorded 23 incidents of direct or indirect attacks on the HRDs' community in Afghanistan impacting 100 HRDs, WHRDs and CSAs in 2019, and 10 incidents impacting 67 HRDs, WHRDs and CSAs in 2018. Eight HRDs were killed and three were injured in targeted attacks in 2018-2019. Two WHRDs were gang-raped by non-state actors.

The majority of HRDs victims (88 percent) over the two-year period suffered as a result of attacks attributed to the Taliban – Taliban were implicated in impacting 147 HRDs out of the total recorded 167 HRDs victims in 2018-2019 period. According to the SRMO data, the second main perpetrators of violence against HRDs in 2018-2019 were other non-state actors and powerful warlords. State actors also subjected HRDs to human rights violations such as arbitrary arrest, abduction, judicial harassment and other forms of alleged intimidation. The victims of these violations are individuals who report and raise their voice against human rights abuses and atrocities committed by state actors, powerful warlords and armed groups. SRMO recorded cases of attacks against the human rights defenders across Afghanistan, revealing that HRDs and WHRDs, as well as grass root activists, can be targeted and are at risk due to their human rights work everywhere in the country. The insecure areas for HRDs increased as Taliban extended their armed campaign. In Kabul, SRMO recorded eight cases of HRDs subjected to targeted attacks and intimidation in 2018-2019: Taliban and other non-state actors attacked, killed and intimidated HRDs and WHRDs in Kabul, while the state security forces abducted and illegally detained two HRDs. HRDs in the provinces experienced also direct attacks and intimidation as growing insecurity was an additional factor to their vulnerability and restricted their operations. Fearing Taliban reprisals, large number of HRDs, fled provinces under Taliban assaults in Farah and Ghazni in 2018 and Baghlan and Kunduz in 2019.

The exclusive peace negotiations between the United States and Taliban which intensified since 2018 and through 2019 sidelined the civil society, victims' groups and WHRDs. The US-Taliban peace negotiations undermined women's rights to equal participation in political, peace and security matters. With their basic rights at stake, given Taliban widely documented record of oppression and violence against women, women activists mobilized in large numbers across the country and

demanded meaningful inclusion in the peace process and seats at the peace negotiating table. Defying threats and restrictions, WHRDs came at the forefront to advocate for justice and assurances of human rights in the peace process, which made them more vulnerable to retaliations. Regrettably, the peace agreement signed between the USA and Taliban in February 2020 did not provide any guarantees for protection of human rights and women's rights, leaving human rights community and women's groups fearful that their rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and association will be compromised as a result of the peace process.¹

Although during the reporting period, the Taliban actively engaged with the US to negotiate a peace agreement, the group did not cease their hostile activities harming and targeting civilians, including targeting individuals for their work on promoting and protecting human rights. The armed group continued to threaten, intimidate and deliberately attack Afghan voters, human rights defenders and aid workers, including medical personnel and teachers, as well as journalists and media workers. Emblematic Taliban attacks on civil society in 2019 include the abduction and killing of a senior staff member of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) in September 2019, and the attack against the aid non-governmental organisation (NGO) Counterpart International in Kabul in May 2019 that killed eight civilians and injured 27. The Taliban accused the NGO that it had "promoted inter-mixing between men and women" and had "groomed Kabul administration security and other personnel in implementing pro-Western objectives."² New serious threats by the Taliban against a number of HRDs who have been vocal against Taliban human rights violations were reported in 2020. As a justification of their attacks on HRDs and civil society organisations (CSOs), Taliban often used accusations that HRDs and CSOs are promoting Western values.

During the reporting period, SRMO recorded cases of the Afghan authorities using the state security apparatus and the judiciary to silence critical human rights defenders by threatening them with arrest and detention.

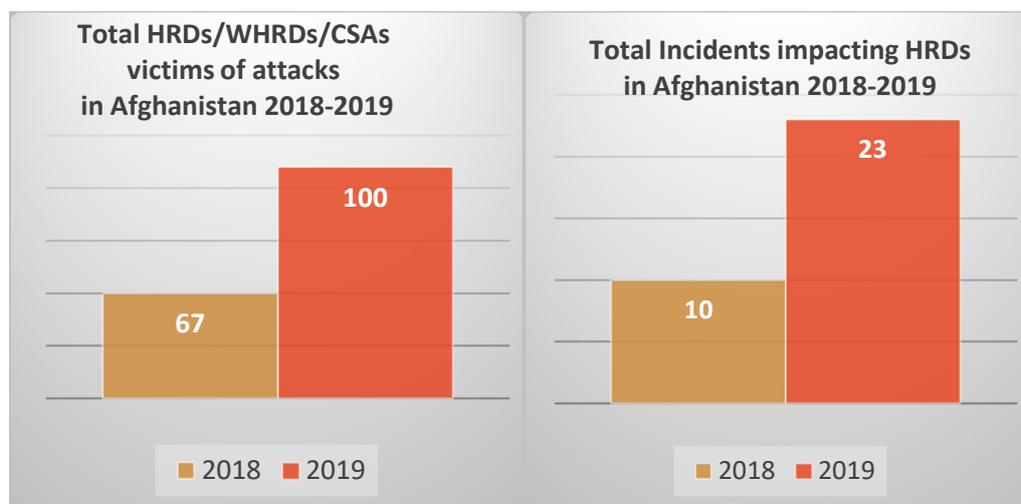
The Afghan authorities continue failing to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of human rights violations against HRDs and WHRDs and CSAs. By failing to defend and protect the rights of human rights defenders the Afghan government also violates the Afghan Constitution which guarantees the right of freedom of expression and association. This also constitutes a violation by the Afghan government of international human rights treaties. Afghanistan is obliged under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to respect, protect and fulfil the right to freedom of expression and ensure an effective remedy.

The growing abuse with impunity against Afghanistan's human rights defenders community is a worrying trend that leads HRDs and WHRDs to self-censor and to shrinking the space of defenders to speak out and actively participate, free from intimidation and attack, in the critical political processes in Afghanistan, such as in pursuit of peace. Also, the environment of fear impedes the contributions of HRDs and civil society towards a just and fair international and national accountability processes

¹ See the full text of the US-Taliban agreement, published by the Afghanistan Analyst Network: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/resources/peace-process/agreement-for-bringing-peace-to-afghanistan-between-the-islamic-emirate-of-afghanistan-which-is-not-recognized-by-the-united-states-as-a-state-and-is-known-as-the-taliban-and-the-united-states-of-amer/>

² UNAMA, Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Midyear Update – 2019, 30 July 2019, https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unama_poc_midyear_update_2019_-_30_july_english.pdf

for war-related crimes, which is expected to intensify as the International Criminal Court starts the investigation on Afghanistan.³



2. Methodology

This report is based on detailed research and documentation by SRMO of 167 cases of violence against human rights defenders (HRDs), women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and civil society activists (CSAs) in Afghanistan, between 2018 and 2019. Through this period, SRMO has been regularly monitoring the general security situation affecting HRDs in Afghanistan and directly assisted HRDs at imminent risk. SRMO has been in contact with over 500 HRDs through its Early Warning System and Hostile Environment Trainings across Afghanistan, which allowed the SRMO to systematically monitor and record the main trends and specific threats against HRDs community. Some of the incidents were directly reported to SRMO which then were researched and verified through different sources while some of the other incidents were publicised in the media. Sources of information include the HRDs victims, their family members, wider HRDs community, media and other CSOs organisations.

A note on the figures used in the report:

The figures of HRDs/WHRDs-related incidents and cases discussed in this report are not exhaustive. Based on its systematic monitoring of the situation on the ground and regular communication with HRDs/WHRDs, SRMO believes that the actual number of attacks and threats against HRDs, WHRDs and CSAs is much higher. There is a low self-care awareness and reporting by HRDs and CSAs of threatening incidents. Through its Early Warning programme and hostile environment training, with targeted programme specifically on WHRDs, SRMO has been raising awareness among HRDs and WHRDs about the need to report threatening incidents.

However, the figures and cases of HRDs abuse, recorded by SRMO, provide a credible indication of the patterns of abuse that HRDs and WHRDs face on daily bases due to their human rights work, and expose the gravity of the harm on HRDs and the civic space in the country.

³ On 5 March 2020, the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court decided unanimously to authorise the Prosecutor to open an investigation into alleged international crimes in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/afghanistan>

3. Security and political context impacting HRDs' safety and civic space

During the period covered by this report, from 2018 to 2019, the security situation in Afghanistan continued to deteriorate resulting in a record high number of civilian casualties, particularly affecting women and children. Additionally, the country faced political instability and violence as parliamentary elections in 2018 and presidential elections in 2019 took place and the peace process between Taliban and the USA intensified. This context affected adversely the civic space in Afghanistan and brought further restrictions on freedom of expression, associations and peaceful assembly, as well as political participation.

Afghanistan is rated as “the least peaceful country in the world” by the Global Peace Index 2019 placing it at the bottom of its 163-country rank list.⁴⁵ The ranking assessed Afghanistan as being less peaceful than Syria, Yemen, South Sudan and Iraq.

Increasing number of Afghans are living in armed conflict environments, as the districts and population under Government control and influence declined steadily and the contested districts and districts under Taliban control increased since 2015.⁶

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has documented more than 100,000 civilian casualties, with more than 35,000 killed and 65,000 injured, since 2009.⁷ Main parties to the armed conflict perpetrating acts harming civilians include: the Afghan national security forces, supported by the international military forces⁸ and pro-government armed groups; and anti-Government armed groups including mostly the Taliban and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP).

In 2019 there were 10,392 civilian casualties (3,403 killed and 6,989 injured) as a result of the armed conflict, according to UNAMA. This is a five per cent decrease in civilian casualties in 2019 as compared

⁴ UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019, https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_annual_report_2019_-_22_february.pdf

⁵ Global Peace Index (GPI), produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), ranks 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness, using three thematic domains: the level of Societal Safety and Security; the extent of Ongoing Domestic and International Conflict; and the degree of Militarisation. See the Global Peace Index 2019 Report: <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/07/GPI-2019web.pdf>

⁶ According to data provided by the NATO Resolute Support's (RS) to SIGAR, as of 22 October 2018, there were 219 districts under Afghan government control (74) or influence (145), 53.8% of the total number of districts. Insurgent control or influence of Afghanistan's districts increased marginally: there were 50 districts under insurgent control (12) or influence (38) this quarter. The number of contested districts—controlled or influenced by neither the Afghan government nor the insurgency—increased to 138 districts, 33.9% of Afghanistan's districts are now contested. SIGAR 2018 Report, <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2019-01-30qr.pdf> p 69-71; <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/09/several-districts-change-hands-as-fighting-rages-in-northern-afghanistan.php>

⁷ UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019, https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_annual_report_2019_-_22_february.pdf

⁸ On 1 January 2015, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan transitioned to its non-combat successor, the Resolute Support Mission, following the handover of security responsibility to Afghan National Security forces in December 2014.

to 2018, which UNAMA says is due to the decrease in attacks by the ISIL-KP. However, UNAMA found that civilian casualties caused by the Taliban and by the international military forces increased.⁹

One of the major perpetrators of harmful acts to civilians remain the anti-government armed groups such as Taliban and the ISIL-KP. UNAMA attributed majority of civilian casualties (62 per cent in 2019¹⁰ and 63 per cent in 2018¹¹) to Taliban and other armed groups, mainly as a result of indiscriminate suicide and complex attacks and the use of IEDs, and deliberate and targeted attacks against civilians.¹² In 2019, an intense campaign of airstrikes by international military forces and search operations by Afghan forces caused a 13 per cent increase in civilian casualties as compared to 2018. According to UNAMA, Pro-Government Forces were responsible for 2,933 civilian casualties (1,473 killed and 1,460 injured) in 2019.¹³

The 2018 parliamentary and 2019 presidential elections were marred by violence and deliberate attacks mainly perpetrated by the Taliban, who targeted civilians, including attacks against voters, campaign workers, candidates and others involved in the electoral process.¹⁴ Schools and hospitals when used as polling centers were also attacked in the context of the 2019 presidential elections.¹⁵

In the past years, the Taliban extended their armed campaign to the urban areas and attacked provincial centers, expanding to regions considered previously relatively safer in the North and West of the country. This put the HRD/WHRD community, often concentrated in the provincial capitals, at greater risk. Taliban large-scale offensives on provincial capitals in 2018 and 2019 posed a serious threat to the safety and work of HRDs and civil society causing large numbers of HRDs displacement. In 2019, amid the height of the peace talks with the United States, the Taliban staged a large assault against the capitals of Kunduz, Baghlan and Farah provinces.¹⁶ In 2018, Taliban also staged two major assaults: a one-day assault on Farah city and protracted attacks on Ghazni city in August and through November 2018. The fighting resulted in a high number of civilian casualties¹⁷ and led to HRDs and CSOs seeking an emergency relocation. (See below SRMO's emergency response with relocating affected HRDs from these provinces).

ISIL-KP also attacked civil society activists and has significantly impacted on the rights of freedom of peaceful assembly and expression in the country. ISIL-KP has been present mostly in Eastern Afghanistan, but it also launched major attacks in Kabul and Herat. The ISIL-KP launched systematic sectarian-motivated campaign against the Shia community – targeting places of worship, weddings, political and social gatherings. These attacks infringed the rights to cultural and religious expressions of the Shi'a Muslim religious minority population. In 2019, UNAMA documented a decrease of ISIL-KP

⁹ UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019 https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_annual_report_2019_-_22_february.pdf

¹⁰ UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019

¹¹ UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019

¹² UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019, p 10.

¹³ UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019

¹⁴ UNAMA, 2019 Election Violence - Election-Related Violence in Afghanistan and its Impact on Civilians, 15 October 2019, <https://unama.unmissions.org/2019-election-violence-election-related-violence-afghanistan-and-its-impact-civilians> See also: Two observers killed, many beaten on polling day, Pajwok Afghan News, 17 October 2019, <http://www.elections.pajwok.com/en/2019/10/17/two-observers-killed-many-beaten-polling-day>

¹⁵ UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019

¹⁶ UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019

¹⁷ UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019

attacks due to sustained pressure by the Afghan security forces and the international military, as well as by Taliban.¹⁸



ALI NAQI, CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVIST AND OBSERVER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2019, FROM SAR-I PUL PROVINCE, ABDUCTED ALLEGEDLY BY TALIBAN ON 3 OCTOBER 2019 WHILE RETURNING FROM POLLING CENTER. HIS DEAD BODY WAS RECOVERED ON 8 OCTOBER 2019.

3.1. Intimidating environment: Attacks directed at civil society, media and aid workers

In addition to the general insecurity, a worrying trend that highlights the growing risks to the safety of CSAs and HRDs, is the continued deliberate attacks by armed groups. In 2019, armed groups launched a series of deliberate attacks intentionally targeting NGOs staff, media workers, members of the judiciary, aid workers, health workers and teachers, as well as attacks on schools and health facilities. State actors were also implicated in some attacks against media and HRDs.

The International NGOs Safety Organization (INSO) recorded 242 incidents involving NGOs across the country in 2019¹⁹ and 257 such incidents in 2018.²⁰ Majority of the incidents involving NGOs included abductions (106 in 2018 and 39 in 2019); 30 NGOs staff were killed and 45 injured in 2019, and 65 NGOs staff were injured and 26 killed in 2018.²¹

In 2019, UNAMA documented 17 incidents of deliberate attacks against members of the judiciary, eight incidents of deliberate targeting of healthcare workers and 29 incidents of intentional and direct attacks targeting schools, including girls' schools, or education personnel.²² Armed groups burned schools, kidnapped teachers, forced closures of educational facilities, and directed attacks on students

¹⁸ UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019

¹⁹ INSO NGO Incident Data, Afghanistan, Jan 2019-Feb 2020, <https://www.ngosafety.org/keydata-dashboard/>

²⁰ INSO NGO Incident Data, Afghanistan, Jan 2019-Feb 2020, <https://www.ngosafety.org/keydata-dashboard/>

²¹ INSO NGO Incident Data, Afghanistan, Jan 2019-Feb 2020, <https://www.ngosafety.org/keydata-dashboard/>

²² UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019

and education personnel. In addition, UNAMA documented 75 incidents impacting healthcare in 2019 that resulted in the killing of 13 health personnel and injuring 34, as also 35 health personnel were abducted in 2019. Armed groups kidnapped vaccinators, confiscated ambulances, looted and forced closure of clinics, including direct attacks or threats of attacks against healthcare facilities and personnel. Schools and health facilities have been also affected by search operations and raids by the Afghan national forces.²³

The Aid Worker Security Database documented a total of 32 incidents against aid workers mostly working in national NGOs and INGOs, resulting in 86 victims (majority, 83 of which were local staff) in 2018 and 2019. Incidents include physical attack, shooting, kidnapping, complex and IED attacks, as well as one case of sexual violence. Most cases were attributed to non-state armed groups. Two cases were alleged as a result of raid by international military and Afghan forces on NGO/INGO killing 4 local staff.²⁴

In April 2019, the Taliban announced a “ban” on the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in areas under the group control, accusing both organisations of "suspicious" activities during a vaccination drive.²⁵ Due to the withdrawal of security guarantees, ICRC and WHO suspended temporary its activities until Taliban lifted its ban in September²⁶ with conditions. Taliban demanded that vaccinations are since only allowed to be carried out from health facilities and the ban on house-to-house vaccination campaigns remains.

Freedom of expression in Afghanistan is also declining. Journalists regularly face abuse, intimidation and attacks. The year 2018 was marked the deadliest for media in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001.²⁷ A total of 16 journalists and media workers were killed in 2018, most of them in attacks targeting the media.²⁸ Nine of the journalists were killed in a single incident during twin bombings in Kabul on 30th April 2018, claimed by ISIL-KP. Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan reported a 42 percent reduction in violence against journalists in 2019: in total 115 cases of violence against journalists had been recorded in 2019 and 198 in 2018. However, the high number of violence experienced by journalists while performing their work, is still very concerning. Journalists were subjected to assassinations, beating, threats and humiliation, temporarily arrested by security forces, kidnapped by armed groups; media attack against media outlets and lack of access to information.²⁹ According to UNESCO, 5 journalists were killed in 2019.³⁰ Media rights organisations explained the

²³ UNAMA/OHCHR Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019

²⁴ See: Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB), Afghanistan, 2018 and 2019, <https://aidworkersecurity.org/incidents/search?start=2018&end=2019&detail=1&country=AF>

²⁵ Taliban Announces 'Ban' On WHO, Red Cross Amid Vaccination Drive, Radio Free Europe, 12 April 2019, <https://www.rferl.org/a/taliban-set-ban-on-who-red-cross-in-afghanistan-/29876049.html>

²⁶ WHO welcomes Taliban decision to lift ban on health workers, *France 24*, 26 September 2019, <https://www.france24.com/en/20190926-who-welcomes-taliban-decision-to-lift-ban-on-health-workers> ; Taliban revoke ban on Red Cross, provide security guarantees, Reuters, 15 September 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-taliban/taliban-revoke-ban-on-red-cross-provide-security-guarantees-idUSKBN1W003T>

²⁷ CPJ, Afghanistan deadliest country for journalists worldwide in 2018, 19 December 2018, <https://cpj.org/2018/12/number-of-journalists-murdered-in-reprisal-for-rep.php>

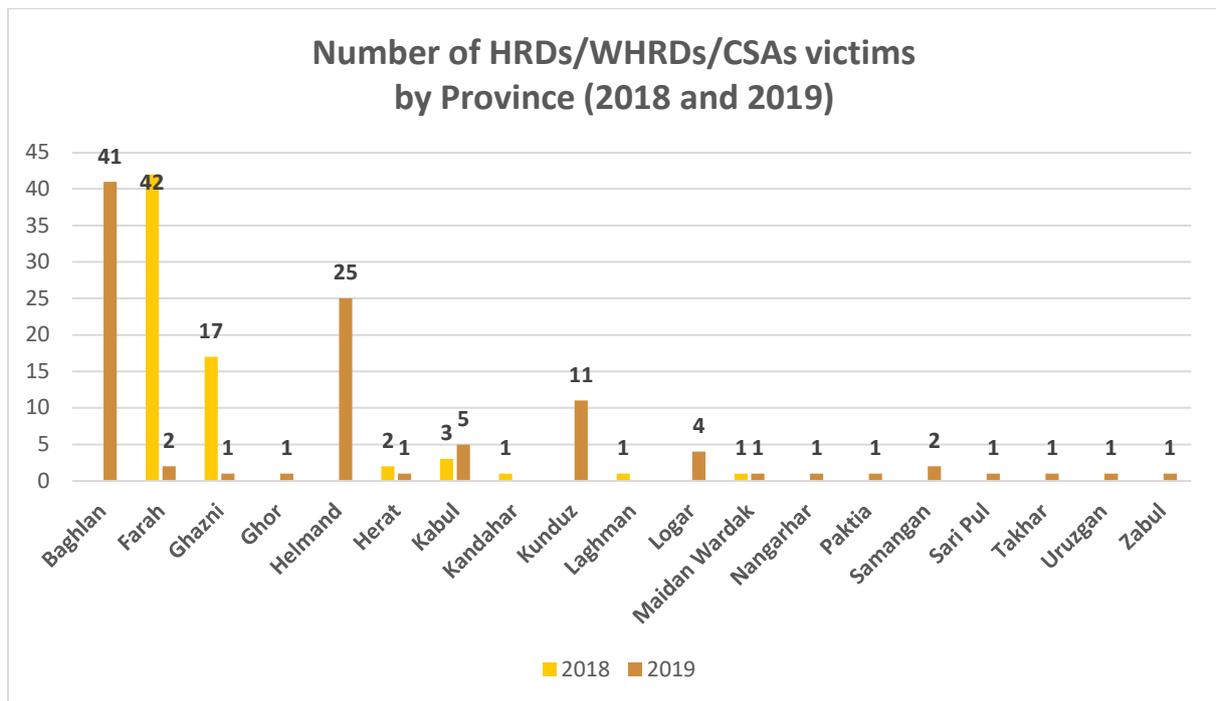
²⁸ UNESCO observatory of killed journalists – Afghanistan, <https://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/observatory/country/223649> and Afghan Journalist Safety Committee, Six Month Report 2018, http://ajsc.af/six_months_reports/summary-of-six-month-report-2018/

²⁹ Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan, Media Watch Report, December 2019, <https://nai.org.af/project/december-9/>

³⁰ UNESCO observatory of killed journalists – Afghanistan, <https://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/observatory/country/223649>

decrease of incidents against journalists in 2019 with the fact that journalists have “learned to minimise their exposure in groups and to reduce their movements in order to limit the possibility of being targeted.”³¹ Violations against journalists were committed by Taliban, and also by state actors such as security guards of the President and other state officials, MPs, police and sometimes the public.³² The continuous lack of access to information remains a challenge for journalists, that often led to violence against journalists.³³

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders noted that HRDs continue to be subjected to “threats and attacks by state actors and non-state actors, including the Taliban, Da'esh, Al Qaeda, warlords, and conservative groups.”³⁴

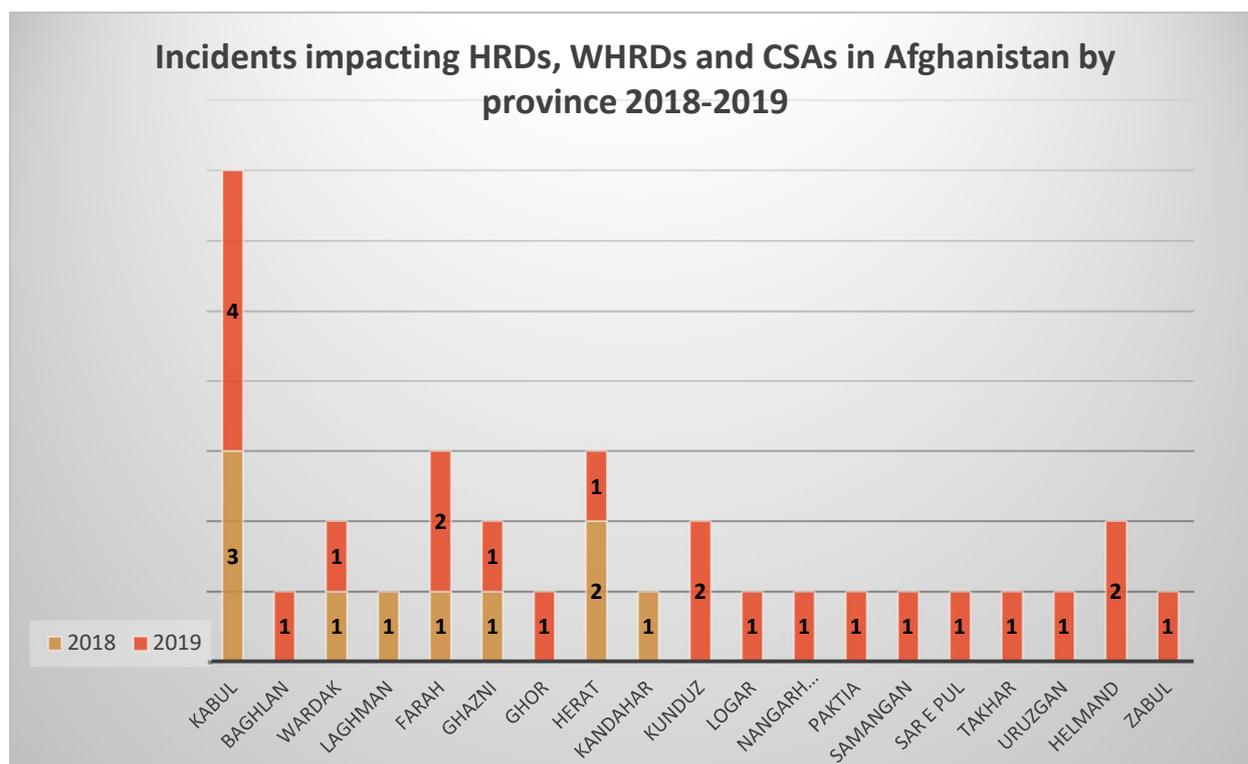


³¹ Reporters Without Borders, RSF yearly round-up: “historically low” number of journalists killed in 2019, 16 December 2019, <https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-yearly-round-historically-low-number-journalists-killed-2019>

³² Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan, Media Watch Report, December 2019, <https://nai.org.af/project/december-9/>

³³ Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan, Media Watch Report, December 2019, <https://nai.org.af/project/december-9/>

³⁴ United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, World Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, December 2018, Afghanistan chapter, page 275, <https://www.business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/documents/UNSR%20HRDs-%20World%20report%202018.pdf>

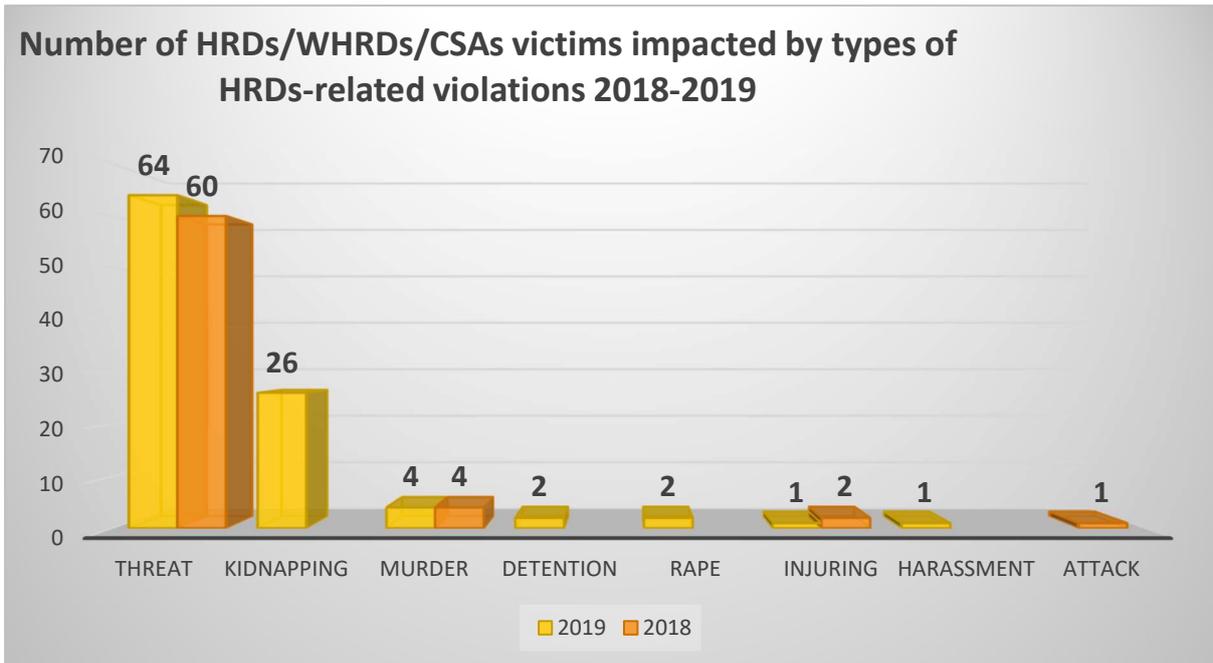


4. SRMO findings: Violations against Human Rights Defenders in Afghanistan

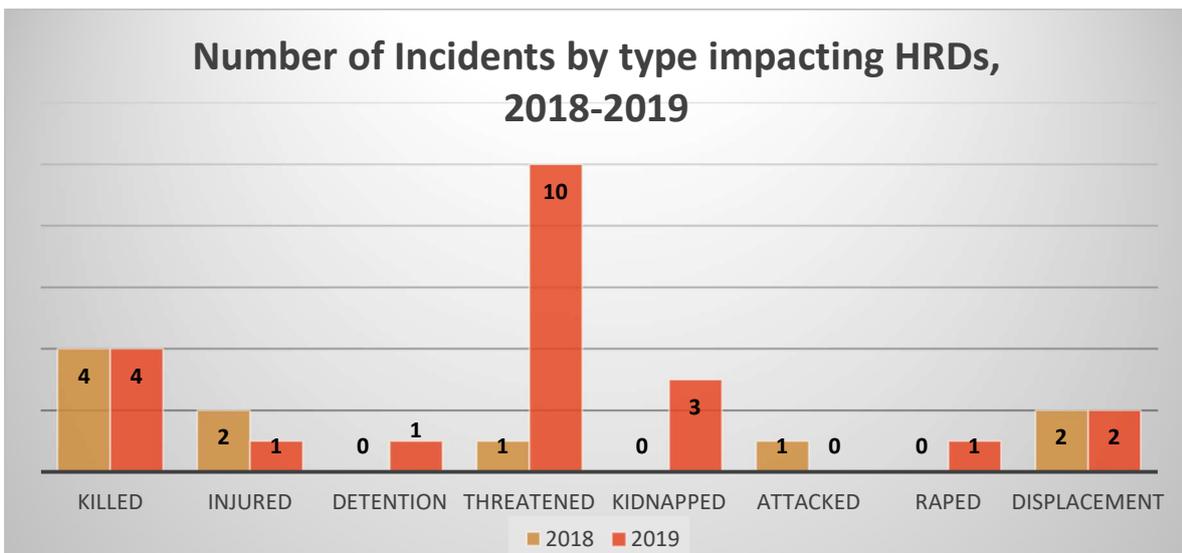
This section provides an analysis of the patterns of attacks against HRDs, based on the data gathered by SRMO through its direct work and assistance to HRDs in Afghanistan in the past two years, 2018 and 2019.

During the period 2018-2019, SRMO documented a total of **167** HRDs/WHRDs and CSAs victims of abuse. SRMO data reveals that HRDs face physical attacks, targeted killings, smear campaigns/ character assassination, acts of intimidation, kidnapping, threats towards the family members and arbitrary arrest and judicial harassment. Additionally, some HRDs, especially WHRDs, were subjected to sexual and gender-based violence.

HRDs and WHRDs in Afghanistan not only faced threats from Taliban and other armed insurgent groups, but they also faced threats from local government officials, warlords and local commanders. Often, especially women human rights defenders also experienced threats from their own families or family members of the perpetrators or victims, as their work is deemed to be challenging for social norms and values.



In 2019, SRMO recoded the highest number of HRDs cases/victims of abuse since 2015 when SRMO started recording cases of violence against HRDs and WHRDs. SRMO documented 100 cases of violence against HRDs and WHRDs in Afghanistan in 2019, an increase of 49 percent, comparing to 67 cases in 2018. The rise of the number of cases reported to SRMO in 2019 is due to the increased insecurity and political instability in Afghanistan. Also, another factor could be that with the time SRMO expanded and strengthened contacts and communications with HRDs and CSA in the provinces and other national organisations who more regularly provide information about incidents.



In 2019, SRMO documented worrying patterns of abuse and human rights violations against HRDs/WHRDs and CSAs: 64 reported threats in relation to Taliban acts of violence, 26 activists were kidnapped by Taliban, 4 CSOs and lawyers were killed and another injured in targeted attacks against HRDs committed by Taliban and other non-state actors. State actors were responsible for at least five

cases of abduction, illegal detention and harassment of activists, including judicial harassment. Two WHRDs were gang-raped by non-state actors.

For comparison, in 2018, the individual cases of HRDs subjected to human rights violations and intimidation recorded by SRMO, consist of 60 HRDs cases of threats related to Taliban, 4 cases of murder of HRDs and lawyers and 3 cases of physical attack and injuring of HRDs attributed to Taliban and other non-state actors.

In 2018 and 2019, SRMO recorded a worrying constant pattern of targeted killings of HRDs. The organisation documented four killings in each year of 2018 and 2019 – (a total of 8 HRDs were killed during the two-year period).

HRDs also faced a persistent high level of threats. The majority of HRD abuse cases reported to SRMO and seeking protection assistance in both 2018 and 2019 were related to threats to personal security. Majority of threat cases were reported in the context of the large-scale Taliban assaults on the provincial capitals of Farah and Ghazni in 2018 and Baghlan and Kunduz in 2019. This led to over 100 HRDs and WHRDs fleeing the provinces fearing Taliban abusive record towards critical HRDs and women active in public sphere failing to observe strict Sharia norms prescribed by Taliban.

In addition, SRMO recorded at least 13 cases of HRDs and WHRDs subjected to serious threat and intimidation, related directly to their human rights work. SRMO documented four cases of direct threats and intimidations in 2018 and nine cases in 2019. These acts of intimidation came not only from the Taliban and armed groups but also from government officials. SRMO managed to temporarily relocate ten of the HRDs and WHRDs victims of intimidation to a safe place, from where they could continue their human rights work and return after the threats/intimidations subsided.

Majority of the HRDs, WHRDs and CSAs victims recorded by SRMO in 2018 and 2019 were as a result of attacks attributed to Taliban: 85% of HRD violence cases were attributed to Taliban in 2019, and 93% of HRDs attacks cases were attributed to Taliban in 2018. Taliban allegedly committed four out of the total 8 targeted killings of HRDs in 2018 and 2019, including the deliberate attack and killing of the AIHRC staff member.³⁵ In the remaining four separate cases of killing of HRDs by unknown armed men, no one claimed responsibility. Additionally, no one claimed responsibility for the three cases of the targeted attacks injuring HRDs in 2018 and 2019.

HRDs victims of violence documented by SRMO in 2018 and 2019 included: women human rights defenders, midwives, grassroots civil society activists such as peace activists, staff of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), lawyers, etc.

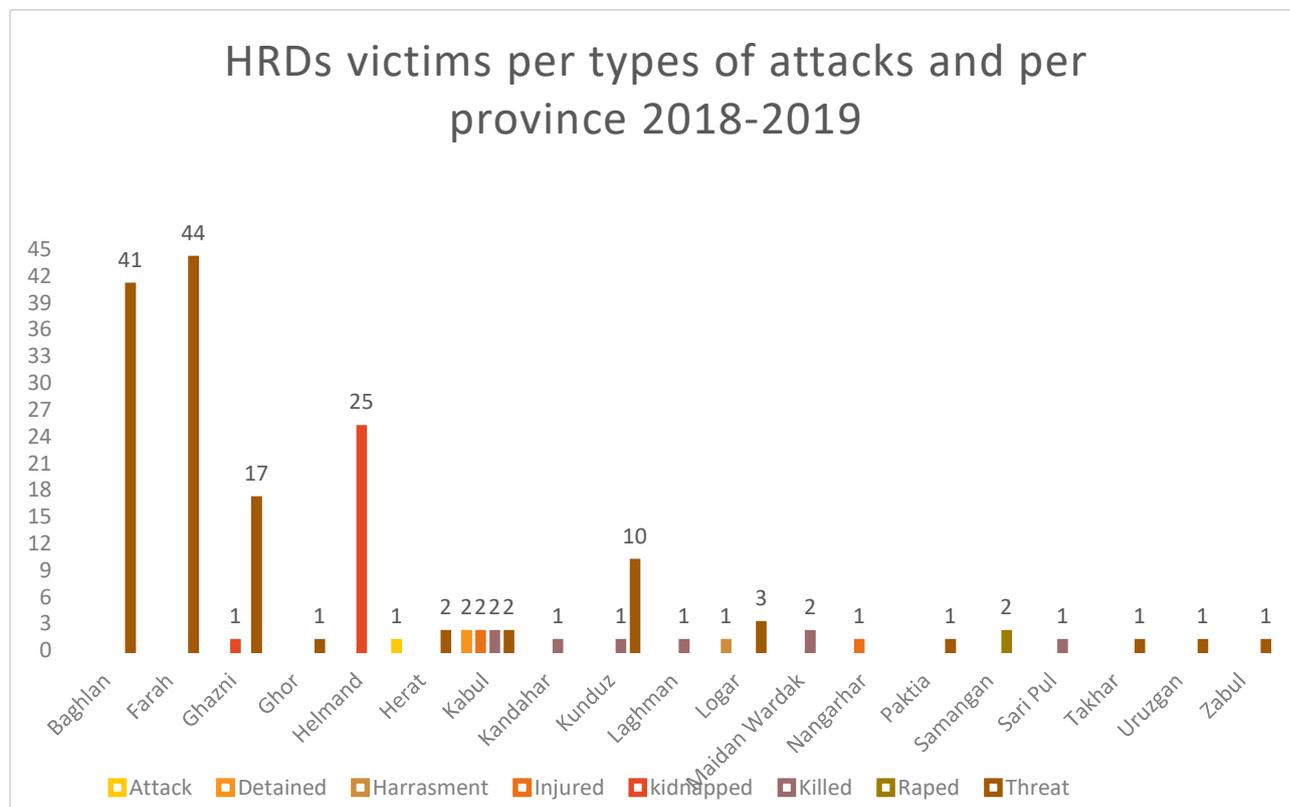
Violence against HRDs is widespread across Afghanistan - HRDs and CSAs remain at risk everywhere in the country due to their human rights-related activities.

Activists reported threats and acts of intimidation by Taliban and other non-state actors from across Afghanistan, creating an environment of fear leading many HRDs to scale down their operations, flee the provinces, and self-censor.

HRDs, WHRDs and CSAs from the provinces in Kabul, Maidan Wardak and Logar in the central region; Kunduz, Samangan and Sar-i- Pul in the north; and Kandahar and Helmand in the south of Afghanistan

³⁵ AIHRC linked Taliban to Mr Ameri's murder. See: AIHRC, On the martyr of the Acting Head of Ghor Provincial Office of the AIHRC, 5 September 2019, https://www.aihrc.org.af/home/press_release/8497

reported the highest level of serious violations, such as killings, attacks, rape and kidnapping by non-state actors as well as state illegal detention. Kabul registered the highest number of targeted physical attacks against the HRDs community (two targeted killings of HRDs – one attributed to Taliban and another to unknown actors, two physical attacks by Taliban and non-state actors, and arbitrary detention of two critical activist by NDS).



4.1. Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs)

The period 2018-2019 presented additional challenges to women’s rights and women human rights defenders in Afghanistan. Women continue to suffer gender-based violence and discrimination and face further restrictions to their basic rights and freedoms due to the growing insecurity and conflict which affects women access to protection services and justice. Women and women civil society were marginalised in the peace talks between Taliban and the US in 2019 and the protection of women’s rights was absent from the talks.³⁶ This triggered the strong public criticism of women’s rights groups who mobilised women across Afghanistan to voice their demands for participation in all stages of the peace process and for women’s rights not to be compromised. In 2019, women made a significant progress in achieving participation in the peace process. The inter-Afghan peace talks between Taliban and prominent Afghan politicians and members of civil society, held in Doha in July 2019, and sponsored by Germany, included 11 female delegates out of 62 Afghan civilian participant.³⁷ In the

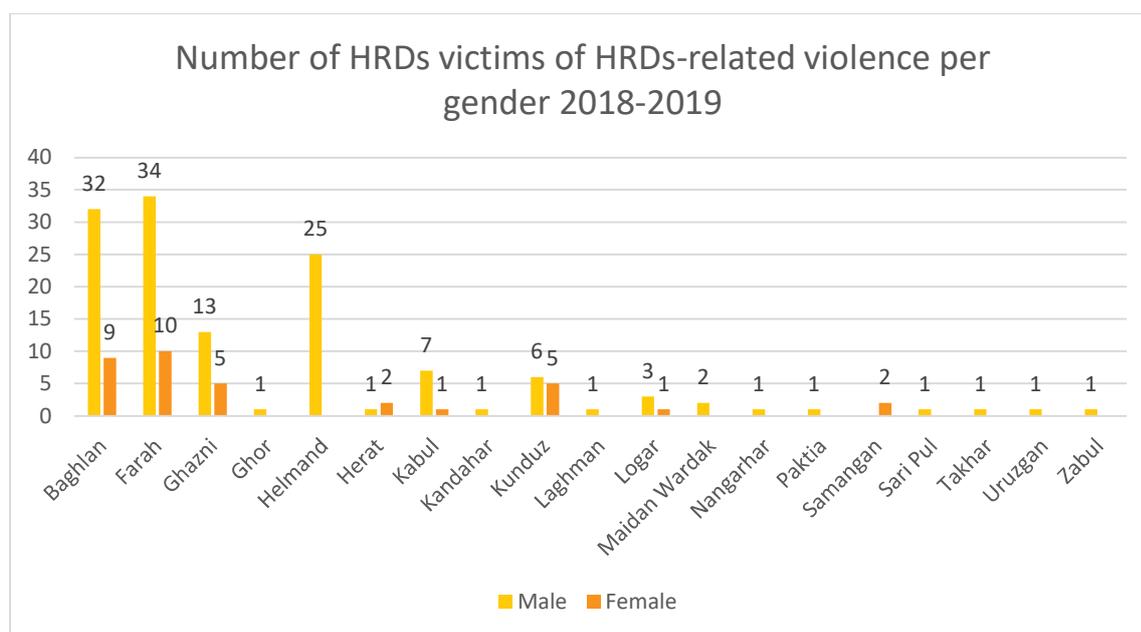
³⁶ UN Security Council, SC/13900, 26 July 2019, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sc13900.doc.htm>

³⁷ The conference brought together representatives from the Afghan government, opposition politicians, media and civil society activists with the Taleban. See: AAN Q&A: What came out of the Doha intra-Afghan conference?, AAN, 11 July 2019, <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/aan-qa-what-came-out-of-the-doha-intra-afghan-conference/>

Government-convened Consultative Loya Jirga on peace in Kabul in April 2019, women for the first time secured around 30 per cent representation and chaired 13 of its 50 committees and were elected as two of the five deputy heads of the assembly.³⁸ However, several female delegates said they felt ignored, marginalized or patronized by male participants.³⁹

In this context affecting women’s rights, in the period 2018-2019, SRMO registered 35 cases of WHRDs impacted by HRDs-related threats and attacks, which included six targeted attacks of serious threats, harassment and sexual and gender-based violence. Two of the cases of serious threats against WHRDs were attributed to Taliban, the other three to non-state actors and one harassment case implicated government officials. During the Taliban offensives in Farah and Ghazni in 2018 and Baghlan and Kunduz in 2019, 29 WHRDs reported being under threat. In 2018 – 2019, SRMO relocated 20 W/HRDs from different provinces where they faced serious threats.

The cases of impacted WHRDs and WHRDs at risk is most likely to be considerably higher than the reported to SRMO. SRMO observed that WHRDs maintain a very low profile in their human rights activities and they are often reluctant to report security incidents fearing that this will bring them more into the spotlight or their families may stop them from working or going out, or even that they may face retribution by their own community for failing to observe the conservative norms.



³⁸ Report of the UN Secretary-General - The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 16 June 2019, A/73/902-S/2019/493.

³⁹ ‘You Should Be in the Kitchen’: At Afghan Assembly, Women Are Told They Don’t Belong, The New York Times, 3 May 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/03/world/asia/afghanistan-women-assembly-loya-jirga.html>

4.2. Abuse against HRDs by government and security actors

Authorities in Afghanistan continued to use intimidating tactics to silence critical HRDs and those exposing government failure and violations. HRDs were threatened with arrest and prosecution, subjected to arbitrary detention and human rights violations during arrest.

In November 2019, the security agencies abducted and subjected to enforced disappearance two HRDs pressuring them to renounce their findings exposing a paedophile ring in Logar implicating local authorities and education staff.⁴⁰ Both human rights defenders, Mr. Musa Mahmudi and Mr. Ehsanullah Hamidi were abducted, held incommunicado, and arbitrarily detained for a few days by the Afghanistan intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security (NDS). Both activists were abducted while on their way to meet with the EU ambassador in Kabul.⁴¹ The defenders alleged there was a paedophile ring in Logar province that abused over 500 children, implicating local education staff and local authority officials. The HRDs' enforced disappearance and follow up arbitrary detention was widely condemned as a method to silence both activists for blowing the whistle on crimes against children. Following the international pressure, both activists were released after five days.⁴² While in detention, the two HRDs were coerced to "confess" in a video statement that their findings were incorrect and were personally motivated and to apologize to the people of Logar province and those affected by the allegations.⁴³

Prior to his arrest, one of the HRDs, was allegedly subjected to death threats by the public and some local state officials in Logar through Facebook and other online and offline means. The threats came after he gave media interviews discussing the issue with the UK newspaper, The Guardian, and local news agency TOLO.⁴⁴ After the interviews, some members of the Logar provincial council allegedly threatened publicly the activist and made statements inciting people against Mr. Mahmudi for "dishonouring" the people of Logar.

The arbitrary detention and treatment by NDS of the two HRDs raised a grave concern about the intimidating environment for HRDs and WHRDs in Afghanistan and more specifically about the role of government institutions to act as a suppressing tool against critical voices.

⁴⁰ See here SRMO's press release calling for the release of the two HRDs: Kabul – Afghanistan: Recover and return safely missing activists Mr. Musa Mahmudi and Mr. Ehsanullah Hamidi, 23 November 2019, https://srmo.org/?page_id=1224

⁴¹ Whistleblowers on school paedophile ring in Afghanistan arrested, The Guardian, 25 November 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/nov/25/afghanistan-launches-investigation-into-alleged-school-paedophile-ring>

⁴² SRMO, Kabul – Afghanistan: Recover and return safely missing activists Mr. Musa Mahmudi and Mr. Ehsanullah Hamidi, 23 November 2019, https://srmo.org/?page_id=1224

⁴³ <http://www.afghanistantimes.af/civil-activists-exposing-alleged-pedophile-ring-released-amid-pressure/> See here SRMO's press release calling for the release of the two HRDs. https://srmo.org/?page_id=1224

⁴⁴ Whistleblowers on school paedophile ring in Afghanistan arrested, The Guardian, 25 November 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/nov/13/afghanistan-paedophile-ring-that-abused-over-500-boys>



PRESS CONFERENCE BY AFGHAN CIVIL SOCIETY MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS COMMITTEE IN KABUL, CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE TWO HRDs WHO WERE ARBITRARILY DETAINED ON 21 NOVEMBER 2019 AFTER EXPOSING ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST CHILDREN IN LOGAR.

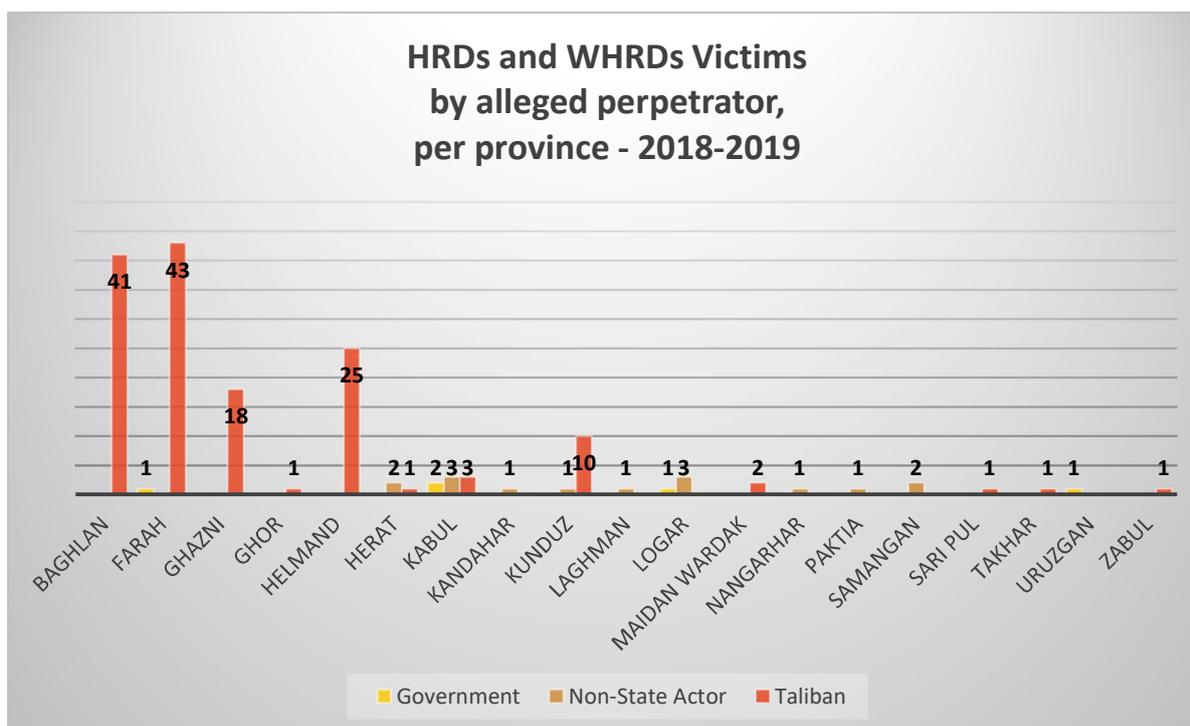
4.2.1. Judicial Harassments

Afghan government officials continue to threaten with prosecution critical civil society, media workers and HRDs when speaking out against corruption, misuse of power, nepotism and breach of law by Afghan government officials and members of the Afghan parliament.

In March 2019, an HRD from a Western province of Afghanistan was continuously harassed by the prosecutor's office because of his public speeches and media interviews discussing the security situation in the province. He was allegedly threatened by the local provincial authorities to stop his activism and criticism of the government officials, otherwise he will be arrested and imprisoned for "spreading propaganda" against the Afghan government.

In March 2019, another HRD from the Southern region was also harassed and threatened with arrest and detention by a provincial prosecutor's office after a complaint against him was submitted by the provincial governor and police chief.

Both acts of judicial harassment were initiated by the provincial authorities and it is believed to be politically motivated to silence the HRDs and stop them from speaking out and criticizing the local government officials.



4.3. Violence against HRDs by Non-State Actors

Between January 2018 and December 2019, SRMO recorded eight fatal attacks against HRDs and CSAs in Afghanistan. The victims were deliberately targeted likely due to their human rights works. Out of the eight HRDs murder cases: at least three HRDs were deliberately killed allegedly by the Taliban, one was killed in a bomb attack, while in the remaining four cases no one claimed responsibility.

In September 2019, Mr. Abdul Samad Ameri, acting head of the AIHRC office in Ghor province, was kidnapped and later killed allegedly by Taliban.⁴⁵ Mr Ameri was abducted while traveling on a passenger bus through the Jalrez district of Maidan Wardak province when the bus was stopped by the Taliban. He was kidnapped, kept in captivity and was shot dead three days later. No one was arrested in connection with the killing of Mr. Ameri.

⁴⁵ AIHRC linked Taliban to Mr Ameri's murder: https://www.aihrc.org.af/home/press_release/8497



ABDUL SAMAD AMERI, ACTING HEAD OF GHOR PROVINCIAL OFFICE OF THE AIHRC, ABDUCTED AND KILLED BY TALIBAN IN MAIDAN WARDAK PROVINCE, ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2019.

In July 2019, Mr. Said Karim Musawi, a well-known HRD, was shot and killed near his home in Kunduz city by two unknown gunmen riding on a motorbike. Mr. Musawi had earlier reported receiving threats by the Taliban and other unidentified callers demanding that he stops his activism. He refused to leave his province and continued his work. No one was arrested in connection with his killing.



SAEED KARIM MUSAWI, A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER SHOT DEAD BY UNKNOWN GUNMEN ON 23 JULY 2019 IN KUNDUZ.

In October 2018, Mobinullah Aymaq, Director of Free Watch Afghanistan, was shot and wounded by unknown gunmen in Kabul, while he was on his way home. No one was arrested in connection with the attack. Mr. Aymaq had previously reported receiving anonymous phone threats.

4.3.1. Attacks by Non-State Actors targeting WHRDs

Women human rights defenders (WHRDs) continued to face restrictions and targeted attacks, including sexual violence, by non-state actors. WHRDs have been attacked simply for defending victims of violence against women and for promoting women's rights, including sexual and reproductive rights and the human rights of political participation and gender equality.

One of the emblematic cases of violence against WHRDs in 2019, is the gang rape and assault of a midwife and her assistant nurse in Samangan province in May 2019.⁴⁶ Both victims were working at a local maternity clinic in Do-Aab district of Samangan province, providing maternal and sexual health services to women and girls. They were violently attacked and gang-raped by a group of 9-10 men who forced their way inside their clinic. The case was investigated by the Attorney General Office which sought prosecution under the Eliminating Violence against Women Law (EVAW law).⁴⁷ Nine culprits were arrested by the police, but because of the long process and delays of the court process, the evidence was reportedly compromised.⁴⁸

In August 2018, Mr. Shoaib, a male defence lawyer working on cases of violence against women in Laghman province was shot and killed by the relative of a victim of domestic violence that he was representing in court. The perpetrator was arrested and detained by police.

4.3.2. Peace process and HRDs

HRDs in Afghanistan have been treading a thin line while reporting on human rights violations committed by state and non-state parties in the armed conflict. HRDs often have been targeted by both sides for their critical human rights reporting. The peace process and sensitivity around it added another layer of complexity threatening HRDs' safety.

In 2019, dozens of CSAs engaged with peace campaigning were harassed and abducted reportedly by Taliban in a number of occasions. More than 50⁴⁹ peace activists of the Helmand Peace Convoy (also called People's Peace Movement) were kidnapped by Taliban in four different incidents, one was allegedly tortured and threatened to end his activism for peace.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Attorney General's Office, AGO Completed the Case of Rape on a Midwife in Samangan, 22 June 2019, <https://ago.gov.af/en/ago-completed-case-rape-midwife-samangan>

⁴⁷ Attorney General's Office, AGO Completed the Case of Rape on a Midwife in Samangan, 22 June 2019, <https://ago.gov.af/en/ago-completed-case-rape-midwife-samangan>

⁴⁸ 9 arrested for alleged gang-rape of a mid-wife and a nurse in Samangan province, The Khaama Press, 21 May 2019, <https://www.khaama.com/9-arrested-for-alleged-gang-rape-of-a-mid-wife-and-a-nurse-in-samangan-province-03440/>

⁴⁹ Officials: 27 Afghan Activists Abducted By Taliban During Peace March , Gandhara – Radio Free Europe, 25 December 2019, <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/officials-27-afghan-activists-abducted-by-taliban-during-peace-march/30344179.html> ; Taliban Takes 25 Members Of Peace Movement Apparently For Talks, Tolo News, 2 June 2019, <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/taliban-receives-four-members-peace-movement-talks>

⁵⁰ Taliban abduct, beat members of the People's Peace Movement, Salaam Times, 4 September 2019, https://afghanistan.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_st/features/2019/09/04/feature-03



AFGHAN CIVIL SOCIETY "YOUTH AND WOMEN PEACE MOVEMENT" HOLDING A DEMONSTRATION OF ABOUT 250 WOMEN, YOUTH AND MEN CALLING ON THE US TO PROVIDE A SPACE FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH IN THE PEACE PROCESS. THE EVENT WAS ORGANISED BY LOCAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS IN KABUL, ON 3 MARCH 2019.

4.3.3. Increased Violence and Insecurity – a threat to HRDs

The large-scale Taliban assaults on the provincial capitals of Farah and Ghazni in 2018 and Baghlan and Kunduz in 2019 resulted in a large number of HRDs and WHRDs and CSAs to flee. Fearing Taliban abusive record of reprisals against critical HRDs, over 100 HRDs and WHRDs fled to the neighboring provinces and to Kabul city. In 2019, Taliban advancing and fighting in Kunduz and Baghlan provinces forced over 50 HRDs to flee and in 2018, 59 HRDs fled from Farah and Ghazni Taliban offensives. HRDs, WHRDs and CSAs feared possible reprisals from the Taliban, as many already had reported previous threats by the armed group.

The Taliban often accused Afghan HRDs, WHRDs and CSAs, who have been critical of Taliban actions, of promoting Western culture in the country and labeled them "infidels" and "spies" - such accusations are often used by Taliban to justify attacks and killings of activists.

The local and international organizations who supported mass-evacuation and relocation of HRDs, WHRDs and CSAs exposed to Taliban large-scale offensives in the past, in 2019 were reluctant to assist similar relief operations. This exposed HRDs fleeing Taliban large-scale assaults to high risks. Some of the defenders and activists fled the provinces through whatever means they could find, while others stayed in hiding and in fear of being attacked or killed. Some of the organisations with HRDs relief programmes expressed willingness to help individual HRDs only but were unable to support a bigger group of HRDs at risk.



HAFIZULLAH SAHAR, A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER (ON THE PICTURE IN THE RIGHT), WAS INJURED IN A BOMB ATTACK BY A MAGNETIC IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVES DEVICE ATTACHED TO HIS CAR, JALALABAD, 6 NOVEMBER 2019.

5. Impunity for Attacks against HRDs

Afghanistan has a poor record of investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of threats and attacks, including death threats, and killings of HRDs, WHRDs, CSAs and journalists. No one is known to have been arrested in connection to the killings of HRDs who were attacked and killed during 2018-2019 in Afghanistan.

In the case of the gang rape and violent attack of the midwife in Samangan province in May 2019, the perpetrators, four of whom were underaged, were arrested, detained and charged under the Eliminating Violence against Women Law with sexual assault and use of violence.⁵¹ However, due to the long court process and delay, the evidence was reportedly compromised. Out of the nine arrested, five were released on bail and four of them are still in police custody waiting for the court decision. The Prosecutor representing the victims has asked the court to send the evidence out of the country for DNA testing. The decision has been delayed as the court is waiting for the DNA results. All of the accused have denied the accusation of sexual assault and rape.

Afghanistan has similarly a poor record of also bringing to justice perpetrators of violence against journalists. The CPJ's 2019 Global Impunity Index ranked Afghanistan sixth of the worst states failing to bring accountability for killings of journalists.⁵²

⁵¹ Attorney General's Office, AGO Completed the Case of Rape on a Midwife in Samangan, 22 June 2019, <https://ago.gov.af/en/ago-completed-case-rape-midwife-samangan>

⁵² CPJ Global Impunity Index 2019, <https://cpi.org/reports/2019/10/getting-away-with-murder-killed-justice.php>

Instead of adequately investigating the cases, the authorities at times suggested that the activists purchase weapons to protect themselves, according to victims HRDs. The government even accused HRDs of fabricating the threats to leave the country. Women HRDs have had similar experiences when they approached the government for protection.

The lack of adequate response and protection by the Afghan government and as authorities also have been involved in intimidation and human rights violations against HRDs and CSAs, there is low level of trust by HRDs and CSAs in the authorities and security institutions. Many human rights defenders say they are reluctant to report cases as fear that this may make them more vulnerable to reprisals.⁵³

6. Legal Framework and Protection Mechanisms

The rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly are guaranteed by the Afghanistan Constitution under Articles 34, 35 and 36. The Constitution also guarantees the right of access to information, however, it imposes the limitation of “harming rights of others as well as public security”. Communication privacy and freedom of movement are also safeguarded by Articles 37, 38 and 39 of the Constitution. Civil society groups are governed by the Law on Associations 2013 (amended in 2017) and the Law on Non-governmental Organisations (NGO Law) 2005. Article 5(2) of the Law of Associations and Article 8 of the NGO Law prohibits participation in 'political' activities', which is generally understood as involvement in campaigning and elections rather than advocacy.

In 2018 Afghanistan passed the revised law on the right to access information. The law remains unimplemented. The Afghan government institutions and officials continue to arbitrarily deny access to information to HRDs and the media. Even journalists and HRDs often face threats, attacks and intimidation from the officials, when requesting information. In February 2020, 30 Afghan news agencies protested against the failure of the Government to implement the law.⁵⁴

Afghanistan is party to most international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which obliges the Government to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of freedom of expression (article 19), the right to freedom of association (article 22), and the right to peaceful assembly (article 21).⁵⁵ The ICCPR protects the work of HRDs, WHRDs and journalists “to seek, receive and impart information”, to form associations and to stage peaceful protests and assemblies. Also, under the ICCPR the Government has a duty to respect and protect the rights of HRDs, WHRDs, CSAs and journalists –to life and security, freedom from torture, from arbitrary detention and arbitrary arrest. The State also has the obligation to provide an effective remedy if any of these rights are violated, “notwithstanding that the violation has been committed by persons acting in an official capacity” (article 2(3)(a) of ICCPR).

⁵³ See also Amnesty International, “Defenceless Defenders: Attacks on Afghanistan’s Human Rights Community, August 2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/08/afghanistan-human-rights-defenders-under-attack/>

⁵⁴ Tolo News, Twitter message, 4 February 2020, <https://twitter.com/TOLONews/status/1224577093817847813>; Reporters Without Borders, 4 February 2020 <https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-backs-afghan-media-call-access-state-held-information>

⁵⁵ See all UN Human Rights Treaties ratified by Afghanistan, UN OHCHR, UN Treaty Body Database, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=1&Lang=EN

Further, in the Afghanistan's context of non-international armed conflict, International Humanitarian Law -Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions applies which prohibits parties to the armed conflict, including State or non-State, to conduct attacks against civilians who are not directly participating in hostilities⁵⁶ - such as HRDs, WHRDs, civil society members and journalists. Hence, under International Humanitarian Law, acts such as killing, violence to person, hostage taking, and torture of HRDs, WHRDs, civil society members and journalists may amount to war crimes.

6.1. HRDs Protection Mechanisms

In January 2020, the Afghan authorities made a public commitment to establish a protection mechanism for human rights defenders during an event organized by Amnesty International on HRDs. At the event, human rights organizations presented a joint strategy calling for the establishment of “a protection mechanism that effectively investigates attacks on human rights defenders, responds immediately to incidents of threats and attacks, offers relief support to human rights defenders at risk, builds the capacity of the human rights community and creates an enabling environment where human rights defenders can do their work freely and without fear of reprisal.”⁵⁷

Previously the Afghan government made commitments to support HRDs given the increasingly threatening environment, but no further concrete actions have been taken since. For example, in an AIHRC-hosted conference on the situation of human rights defenders in Afghanistan in 2016, AIHRC called for the development of a national action plan for the protection of human rights defenders. The President then announced his readiness to support human rights defenders in accordance with Afghan laws. Further in 2017, the Afghan government pledged at the UN Human Rights Council to protect HRDs against threats and attacks and promised to establish an information-sharing mechanism for HRDs in the country. During the UN Universal Periodic Review on Afghanistan in 2019, several recommendations were addressed to the Afghan government to take measures to protect HRDs.⁵⁸

Local non-governmental HRDs protection strategies and mechanisms have been developed to support Afghan HRDs at risk. The EU-initiated Local Strategy for Human Rights Defenders was launched in 2014 and updated in 2016. In 2016, the AIHRC developed an Action Plan to Support HRDs, but it has not been supported yet by a Presidential Decree required for its realization. Both HRD protection strategies lack adequate financial resources and need enhanced government and international donors support as well as better coordination to ensure its successful implementation.⁵⁹

56 Common Article 3 to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, explicitly prohibits the following acts against persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including civilians: violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture; taking hostages, outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment; and the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples.

⁵⁷ Amnesty International, Afghanistan: Authorities commit to protect human rights defenders, 20 January 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/01/afghanistan-authorities-commit-to-protect-human-rights-defenders/>

⁵⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review – Afghanistan, (A/HRC/41/5), 24 June-12 July 2019, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/097/86/PDF/G1909786.pdf?OpenElement>

⁵⁹ Amnesty International, Afghanistan: Authorities commit to protect human rights defenders, 20 January 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/01/afghanistan-authorities-commit-to-protect-human-rights-defenders/>

As part of the EU HRD Strategy, a Human Rights Defenders Committee was established, a voluntary network of national HRDs and WHRDs organisations and the AIHRC. The EU HRD Strategy mechanism has been important for providing a coordination platform for different local organisations working on protection of HRDs and WHRDs. But due to the lack of financial support for the EU Strategy, it is limited in its protection response in providing urgent relief and assistance to HRDs at immediate risk (such as internal relocation).

Foreign embassies in Afghanistan provide small and mid-size grants for Civil Society and Human Rights Organizations in the country but rarely have provided much needed financial support to organisations such as SRMO working to protect HRDs at risk. While some international and country specific funding has been allocated to promote human rights and democratic values, the donors do not seem to consider enough the connection between human rights promotion and the protection of HRDs, WHRDs and CSAs. In the growing insecurity affecting directly and indirectly HRDs community in Afghanistan, it is important that more funding is made available for local organisations protecting HRDs. This will ensure Afghan CSOs and HRDs are able to continue to promote human rights and democracy in the ongoing important political developments and peace process.

7. SRMO HRD Protection Activities, 2018 - 2019



SRMO MEETING WITH HUMAN RIGHTS AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS DEFENDERS FROM GHAZNI, IN KABUL, OCTOBER 2019.

7.1. SRMO's Early Warning System and networking

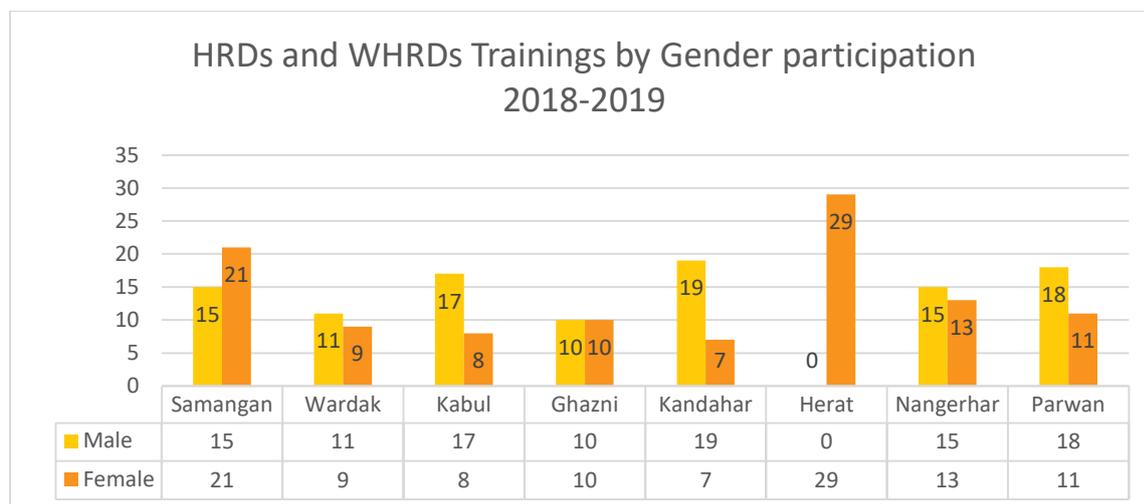
Since 2017 SRMO has been operating an Early Warning System for grassroots HRDs and WHRDs reaching out to hundreds of activists across Afghanistan, who otherwise would not have access to security information and advice. The Early Warning System covers five zones all over Afghanistan which includes Central, Central Highland, East, South, West and North regions. More than 500 HRDs and WHRDs benefit from the SRMO Early Warning System which helps them to be better prepared and stay informed about the current security threats in their respective areas and to plan their safety and security accordingly. The service is provided through internet and a Viber App.

In addition, SRMO facilitates and coordinates network building amongst HRDs and WHRDs all over Afghanistan as a tool to provide peer support and exchange of vital safety information.

7.2. Safety and Hostile Environment training for HRDs and WHRDs

To build the resilience of local human rights defenders' community and enhance their ability to better protect themselves from the growing threats, SRMO conducts safety and hostile environment trainings for HRDs, WHRDs, CSAs and journalists. SRMO conducted eight safety and hostile environment trainings for a total of 213 (105 male and 108 female participants) HRDs and WHRDs, CSAs and media workers, in eight provinces – in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Ghazni, Wardak,

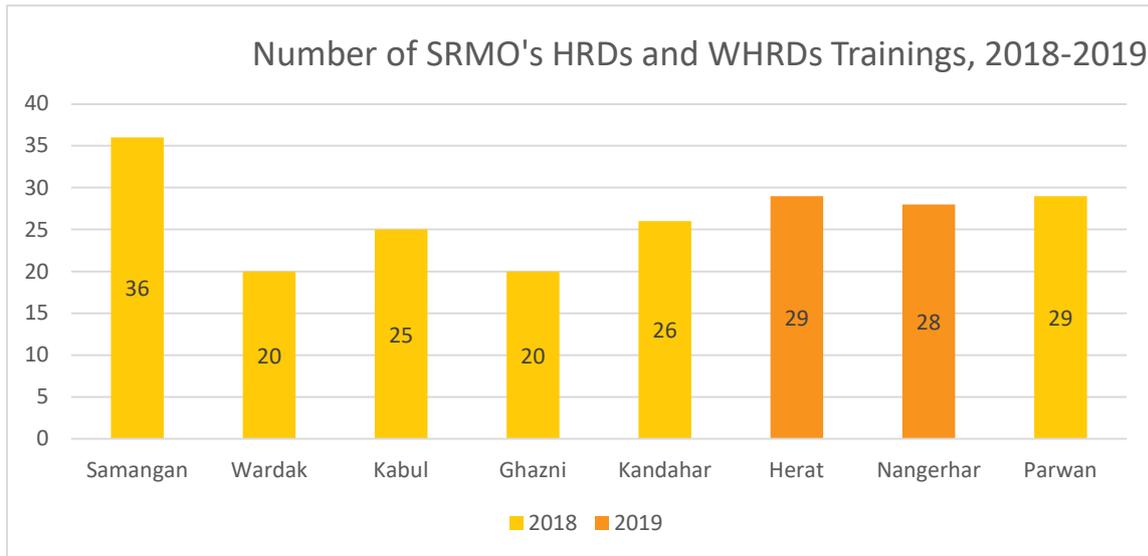
Parwan and Samangan. SRMO made special efforts to ensure equal participation and access to the training to both male and female human rights defenders and for addressing the specific needs of WHRDs in the training programme. Each training was for three full days and was conducted in collaboration and coordination with local Civil Society Organizations, NGOs, Local Governor Offices (Human Rights Section), Ministry of Women Affairs, AIHRC, EU HRDs Protection Committee, Afghan Women Network, Afghan Women Skill Development Centre (AWSDC), Civil Society and Human Rights Network (CSHRN) and other local NGOs.



SRMO Safety and Hostile Environment training for HRDs and WHRDs covered the following subjects:

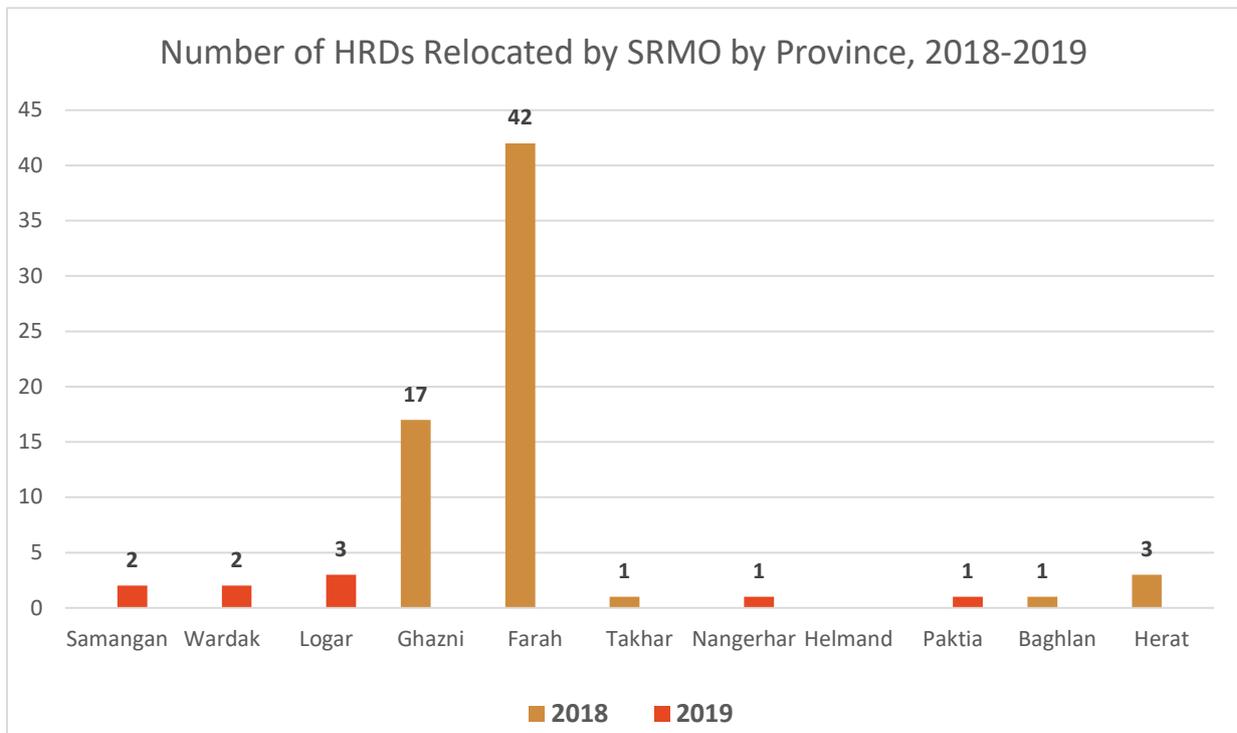
- Identifying and mitigating threats
- Safety measures for travelling in high risk areas
- Mitigate the threat of kidnapping
- Home and office security survey
- Reporting a security incident
- Risk Assessment
- Digital Security training
- First Aid training
- Managing stress and symptoms of stress related to working in hostile environment

Evaluation of the SRMO’s Safety and Hostile Environment training for HRDs and WHRDs, found that the training has been successful as it resulted in HRDs and WHRDs developing their own mitigation and security plans and imbedding them in their operations. Similarly, regular feedback from HRDs and WHRDs who participated in the SRMO training attested to this. As a result of the training, grassroots HRDs and WHRDs were able to manage their own security much better than other fellow HRDs who have not received any such training. However, funding remains an issue, as many local HRDs and WHRDs organisation do not have the adequate resources to build strong safety plans and procedures for their organisations and staff, such as employing security guards, safer vehicles, build safety areas in their offices, etc. Local HRDs and WHRDs requested that donors include funding for HRDs and CSOs safety when providing funding for human rights and humanitarian projects.



7.3. SRMO Assistance for HRDs and WHRDs

Between 2018 and 2019, SRMO was actively involved in directly assisting HRDs, WHRDs, CSAs and media workers at risk all over the country. SRMO provided activists who faced serious risks with temporary respite and emergency relocation for durations from 3 to 6 months, providing living expenses, accommodation, transportation and medical treatments during this time. Activists were relocated within Afghanistan according to the needs of the HRDs and WHRDs who were at risk and only in small number of cases HRDs were relocated outside Afghanistan within the region.



In the period 2018-2019, SRMO relocated a total of 73 HRDs and WHRDs (20 female HRDs and 53 male HRDs) from Baghlan, Herat, Takhar, Farah, Ghazni, Samangan, Logar and Paktia provinces. Majority (59) of the relocated HRDs and WHRDs were relocated in a response to the Taliban major offensive in 2018 on Ghazni and Farah provinces.

In the Taliban 2019 large-scale offensives on Baghlan and Kunduz provinces, SRMO could not secure funding to provide the necessary emergency relocation of HRDs and WHRDs, as donors were reluctant to provide relocation funding for a big group of HRDs. The absence of support to the HRDs community endangered HRDs as the Taliban advancement in 2019, left tens of HRDs and WHRDs in a desperate situation. SRMO recorded at least 51 HRDs and WHRDs at risk in both provinces.

Other cases in which SRMO provided emergency relocation include HRDs and

WHRDs who received direct death threats because of their human rights works from Taliban and sometimes from the local government authorities.

Most of the HRDs and WHRDs at risk were relocated internally to Kabul or to the provincial capitals where they could safely continue their human rights works. Affected HRDs were relocated with their immediate family members who are also at risk as a tool for retaliation against the HRDs/WHRDs.

8. Recommendations

In the current crucial historical moment for Afghanistan with the upcoming inter-Afghan peace process and International Criminal Court investigation of war-related crimes, SRMO urges the Afghanistan government, parties to the armed conflict and the international community to urgently implement the below practical recommendations. This will guarantee the Afghan civil society and human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, have the safe space to participate meaningfully in ensuring a just and sustainable peace process that will guarantee the rights of all groups of Afghan society and also the fair international accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

To the Afghanistan Government

- The Government must enact laws, policies, and practices to recognize and ensure protection of the rights of human rights defenders, and implement them through the provinces.
- Take all possible measures to ensure an enabling and safe environment for HRDs and WHRDs, including in ensuring their meaningful participation in all stages, including decision-making, at the peace process and transitional justice.
- The Government should ensure that the rights and freedoms of HRDs related to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly are not restricted by law and in practice, including by any peace deal.
- The Government should take seriously and ensure that each case of threats, intimidation, attacks and killings of human rights defenders and civil society activists is promptly, thoroughly and independently investigated and prosecuted. Including of incidents in which government officials are being implicated.

- The Government should publicly condemn violations against HRDs when they occur.
- The Government should follow through on its commitment to establish a national protection mechanism for HRDs at risk, in consultation with the civil society and the AIHRC. The mechanism should be adequately resourced and funded at national and provincial levels to ensure preventative measures as well as measures of emergency response, considering the gender-specific needs. This protection mechanism should operate in coordination with other non-governmental HRD protection programmes in Afghanistan.
- Support politically and financially the AIHRC Action Plan for HRDs and ensure timely and effective cooperation under the envisaged responsibilities in the Plan.
- The Government should provide clear guidance to all law enforcement agencies at provincial and national level to i) respect the rights of HRDs, and ii) to take reports of attacks and threats against HRDs and WHRDs seriously and ensure that timely and adequate protection is provided to individuals at risk.
- The Government should implement the law on access to information immediately.

To the Donors and international community

- Provide an adequate funding to NGOs working on protection of HRDs and WHRDs, with flexibility on timeframe and considering the needs of responding to emergency situations. The current lack of funding for emergency relocation endangers further the safety of HRDs and WHRDs.
- Emergency grants should be provided through a simplified process for NGOs to support HRDs and WHRDs in a timely manner - the process should be relieved from administrative procedures, quick and effective to allow for a rapid emergency response.
- In collaboration with the civil society, including victim's groups, WHRDs and transitional justice groups, design protection strategies enabling HRDs and WHRDs to engage free from fear of reprisal or attacks at the peace process and in pursuing of transitional justice and international accountability.
- Urge the Afghan Government to take immediate steps to establish the national HRD protection mechanism for HRDs at risk; and provide technical support.
- Urge the Afghan Government to ensure prompt and thorough investigations and prosecutions of violations against human rights defenders and to stop using its security services and the justice system to harass HRDs and restrict their human rights work.
- Regarding the national peace process, urge the Taliban and the Afghan Government to ensure meaningful and equal participation at all stages of the negotiations of civil society, including victims groups and women human rights defenders. The international community should also ensure that women's rights and civic freedoms including freedom of expression are addressed during the negotiations and guaranteed in the peace agreement.

To Taliban and other armed groups

- Immediately stop all attacks and issuing threats against human rights defenders, women human rights defenders, civil society, aid workers, and media including based on their legitimate human rights work and freedom of expression. Respect the protected civilian status

of human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, and media, under the international humanitarian law.

- Urgently issue instructions to local commanders to respect the protected status of HRDs, WHRDs and journalists as civilians and condemn attacks against them with strongest terms, to ensure they continue their work serving and protecting the rights of Afghan people unrestricted and free from fear.

To Taliban regarding HRDs and WHRDs participation in peace process

- Ensure and support civil society and women human rights activists unrestricted access to the peace negotiations. Strongly refrain from threatening, intimidating and attack civil society and women delegates and WHRDs in a reprisal for their participation and intervention at the peace talks.
- Ensure the peace deal guarantees the human rights to freedom of expression and women's human rights, including to equal participation in public and political life.

Annex I: SRMO Records of HRDs/WHRDs and CSAs cases of violations - 2018 - 2019

No	Date	Gender	Victim	Alleged Perpetrator	Province	Violation Type
1	01/08/2018	Male	Lawyer	Non-state actor	Laghman	Killed
2	21/1/2018	Male	HRD	Taliban	Kabul	Injured
3	26/1/2018	Male	CSA	Non-state actor	Herat	Attack
4	27/1/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Kabul	Killed
5	15/5/2018	Male	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
6	15/5/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
7	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
8	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
9	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
10	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
11	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
12	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
13	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
14	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
15	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
16	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
17	15/5/2018	Male	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
18	15/5/2018	Male	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
19	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
20	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
21	15/5/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
22	15/5/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
23	15/5/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
24	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
25	15/5/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
26	15/5/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
27	15/5/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
28	15/5/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
29	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
30	15/5/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
31	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
32	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat

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33	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
34	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
35	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
36	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
37	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
38	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
39	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
40	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
41	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
42	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
43	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
44	15/5/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Farah	Threat
45	15/5/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
46	15/5/2018	Male	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
47	08/12/2018	Male	HRD	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
48	08/12/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
49	08/12/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
50	08/12/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
51	08/12/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
52	08/12/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
53	08/12/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
54	08/12/2018	Female	HRD	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
55	08/12/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
56	08/12/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
57	08/12/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
58	08/12/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
59	08/12/2018	Male	HRD	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
60	08/12/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
61	08/12/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
62	08/12/2018	Male	HRD	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
63	08/12/2018	Male	CSA	Taliban	Ghazni	Threat
64	14/9/2018	Male	HRD	Taliban	Maidan Wardak	Killed
65	25/9/2018	Male	CSA	Non-state actor	Kandahar	Killed
66	10/01/2018	Female	WHRD	Non-state actor	Herat	Threat
67	10/03/2018	Male	HRD	Non-state actor	Kabul	injured
68	15/1/2019	Female	WHRD	Taliban	Kabul	Threat
69	03/03/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Ghazni	Kidnapped

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70	03/05/2019	Male	HRD	Government	Uruzgan	Threat
71	14/3/2019	Male	HRD	Government	Farah	Threat
72	16/05/2019	Female	WHRD	Non-state actor	Samangan	Raped
73	16/05/2019	Female	WHRD	Non-state actor	Samangan	Raped
74	20/05/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Takhar	Threat
75	26/05/2019	Male	Lawyer	Non-state actor	Kabul	Killed
76	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
77	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
78	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
79	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
80	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
81	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
82	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
83	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
84	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
85	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
86	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
87	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
88	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
89	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
90	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
91	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
92	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
93	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
94	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
95	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
96	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
97	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
98	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
99	06/03/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
100	23/07/2019	Male	CSA	Non-state actor	Kunduz	Killed
101	23/07/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Zabul	Threat
102	25/07/2019	Male	HRD	Non-state actor	Logar	Threat
103	20/07/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Farah	Threat
104	08/01/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Kunduz	Threat
105	08/01/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Kunduz	Threat
106	08/01/2019	Female	CSA	Taliban	Kunduz	Threat

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107	08/01/2019	Female	HRD	Taliban	Kunduz	Threat
108	08/01/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Kunduz	Threat
109	08/01/2019	Female	HRD	Taliban	Kunduz	Threat
110	08/01/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Kunduz	Threat
111	08/01/2019	Female	HRD	Taliban	Kunduz	Threat
112	08/01/2019	Female	HRD	Taliban	Kunduz	Threat
113	08/01/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Kunduz	Threat
114	08/02/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
115	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
116	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
117	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
118	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
119	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
120	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
121	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
122	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
123	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
124	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
125	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
126	08/02/2019	Female	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
127	08/02/2019	Female	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
128	08/02/2019	Female	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
129	08/02/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
130	08/02/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
131	08/02/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
132	08/02/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
133	08/02/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
134	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
135	08/02/2019	Female	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
136	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
137	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
138	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
139	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
140	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
141	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
142	08/02/2019	Female	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
143	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat

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144	08/02/2019	Female	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
145	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
146	08/02/2019	Female	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
147	08/02/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
148	08/02/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
149	08/02/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
150	08/02/2019	Female	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
151	08/02/2019	Female	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
152	08/02/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
153	08/02/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
154	08/02/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Baghlan	Threat
155	08/11/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Helmand	Kidnapped
156	09/03/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Maidan Wardak	Killed
157	29/09/2019	Male	HRD	Non-state actor	Paktia	Threat
158	03/10/2019	Male	CSA	Taliban	Sari Pul	Killed
159	11/01/2019	Female	HRD	Taliban	Herat	Threat
160	11/06/2019	Male	HRD	Non-state actor	Nangarhar	Injured
161	20/11/2019	Male	HRD	Taliban	Ghor	Threat
162	21/11/2019	Male	HRD	Government	Kabul	Detained
163	21/11/2019	Male	HRD	Government	Kabul	Detained
164	21/11/2019	Male	HRD	Non-state actor	Logar	Threat
165	21/11/2019	Male	HRD	Non-state actor	Logar	Threat
166	25/11/2019	Male	HRD	Non-state actor	Kabul	Threat
167	18/12/2019	Female	HRD	Government	Logar	Harrasment



Website: www.srmo.org

Contact: srmo.afg@gmail.com, Info.SRMO@protonmail.com

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