

Hazara Diaspora Organizations' Statement on the Condition of Hazara Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

We, members of the Hazara civil society and diaspora organizations, are gravely concerned about the condition of Hazara refugees and asylum-seekers in the world especially Indonesia and Greece.

According to publicly available figures, more than 7600 Hazara refugees and asylum-seekers, including women and children, are living in Indonesia. The majority of them were recognised as refugees by the UNHCR. And yet, they are still waiting for resettlement in a third country. Indonesia has not ratified the 1951 UNHCR Refugee Convention and hence, has put no protection or settlement mechanism in place as is enshrined in the international legal frameworks. These refugees and asylum-seekers are deprived of their basic human rights, such as the right to education and employment. On the other hand, the suspension of the resettlement scheme during the past four years has left a heavy mental and psychological toll on these refugees and asylum-seekers. According to asylum-seekers themselves, 11 of them have committed suicide. In addition, the asylum-seekers have protested the way they are treated by the UNHCR Jakarta Office and accuse it of discriminatory behavior and putting the asylum-seekers under extreme psychological pressure.

Even more concerning, thousands of Hazara asylum-seekers are living in inhumane conditions in Greece. Most of these asylum-seekers are families who have arrived in Greece after 2015. There are reports of women and girls being abused and children living in the open. We are deeply troubled about the continuation of this situation in Indonesia and Greece. The situation in Turkey, India, and Malaysia is not much different. The only exception being their freedom of movement and lack of forced confinement.

The Status of the Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan

In Afghanistan, Hazaras have been the victim of historical oppression, systematic discrimination, violence and genocidal campaigns. Despite the presence of international military forces in Afghanistan for the past 20 years, Hazaras continue to be victims of extremist violence and systematic discrimination by the Afghan state. In the past six years, Hazaras have been regularly targeted and murdered in the capital city, Kabul, and across Afghanistan.

Currently, no single place in Afghanistan is safe for Hazaras. They cannot travel to other places inside Afghanistan as terrorist groups, especially the Taliban, stop passenger vehicles, single out, and kill Hazara passengers. In government-controlled areas, Hazaras continue to suffer from historical discrimination and prejudice that continues to the present.

The US Department of State in its 2017 annual human rights report said that “Societal discrimination against Shia Hazaras continued along with class, race, and religious lines in the form of extortion of money through illegal taxation, forced recruitment and forced labor, physical abuse, and detention. According to NGOs, the government frequently assigned Hazara ANP officers to symbolic positions with little authority within the Ministry of Interior. NGOs also reported Hazara ANDSF officers were more likely than non-Hazara officers to be posted to insecure areas of the country.”

In the past few months, targeted attacks against the Hazara people have increased in an unprecedented way. On 08 May 2021, a terrorist attack on the *Sayed Shuhada* girls' school in West Kabul killed over 90 Hazara students and injured more than 200 others.

Targeted and widespread attacks against the Hazaras over the past six years are clear examples of attempts to commit the *crime of genocide* against the ethnic and religious community as defined in the Rome Statute and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Attacks which are examples of the genocidal campaign being carried out against Hazaras include an attack against Hazara protestors in July 2016, in which 86 Hazaras were killed and about 400 others were injured, as well repeated attacks on mosques, schools, sports clubs, tutoring centres, and even a maternity hospital, all located in Hazara neighbourhoods, and dozens more.

Despite the continuation of widespread targeted killing of Hazaras, the Afghan government has been negligent and has failed to provide protection. No investigation has been undertaken and the truth about these attacks remains unknown. The Afghan government has only issued hollow condemnations of these attacks. Even those injured have not been properly treated and taken care of.

On 09 May 2021, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission requested the UN to investigate systematic attacks against the Hazara and Shi'a community in Afghanistan.

On 06 June 2021, Shaharзад Akbar, the head of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, told a news conference that "our assessment shows that the Hazara and Shi'a people of Afghanistan are at risk of genocide."

In the past 20 years, the Hazaras in Pakistan have been systematically targeted and killed by extremist groups. According to Pakistan Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Watch, more than 2000 Hazaras, including children and women, have been killed and thousands more injured as a result of extremist attacks on Hazaras in Quetta City. Attacks targeting Hazaras in Quetta saw a steady rise since 2001. Currently, Hazaras are living in "*Hazara Town*" and "*Maryrabad*" in a ghetto-like condition and are not safe outside these confined enclaves.

Human rights organizations such as the National Commission for Human Rights in Pakistan (February 2018), the Institute of Development Research and Corresponding Capabilities (IDRAC) in Islamabad, and the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (20 November 2020) have recognized the deadly campaigns against the Hazara people of Pakistan as genocide.

Our Demands for the UNHCR and Migrant-Recipient Countries

Given the increased security threats against Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan, we, the Hazara diaspora organizations, express our deep concerns regarding the human rights and humanitarian situation of Hazara refugees and asylum-seekers in Indonesia, Greece, Turkey, India, Malaysia, and other countries and call on the UNHCR and migrant-recipient countries to take urgent action to address the Hazara asylum-seekers' condition. Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan are facing

serious security threats and are at risk of genocide. We call on the UNHCR and the countries party to the Refugee Convention to prioritize addressing their concerning situation.

We also call on the UNHCR and migrant-recipient countries, such as, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and member states of the European Union to consider the following in light of international human rights frameworks, and to support the Hazara refugees and asylum-seekers:

1. Support, facilitate and expedite the relocation and resettlement of Hazara asylum-seekers from Indonesia, Greece, Turkey, India to migrant-recipient countries;
2. Consider the situation on the ground in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including the threat of genocide, against the community, and immediately stop the deportation of Hazara asylum-seekers to Afghanistan and Pakistan.
3. We urge migrant-recipient countries, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America and member states of the European Union, to consider the specific situation of Hazara asylum-seekers and make sure that their migration and asylum policies take into account the Hazara people's specific situation.

Endorsed by the following organizations:

Hazara International,

Australian Hazara Women's Friendship Network,

Hazara Council of Great Britain,

World Hazara Council,

Canadian-Hazara Humanitarian Services in Canada,

Salsal Association in Sweden,

Hazara Kulturverein Hamburg,

Katib Cultural Association in Denmark,

World Ismaili Hazara Network in Canada,

Baba Mazari Foundation in Australia

MACHID, INC (Music, Arts, Culture of Hazara Identity- Dandenong

Hazara Community Geelong, Victoria- Australia

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