

August 24, 2021

ORAL STATEMENT

Statement to the 31st Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the Serious human rights concerns and situation in Afghanistan

GANHRI is extremely concerned about the safety of members and staff from the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and calls for immediate measures for their protection.

The AIHRC is a highly esteemed member of GANHRI and has been a critical voice defending human rights in Afghanistan's volatile and highly complex and challenging environment. They have and continue to demonstrate extraordinary bravery and commitment to human rights. As a result of its work and status, AIHRC members and staff today are at high risk. In the past years, AIHRC has lost several of its members and staff in violent attacks.

The AIHRC has regularly reported on the human rights situation in Afghanistan to both this Human Rights Council and to the Security Council, with concrete recommendations for action. It is critically important that UN bodies make space to receive, and act upon, information and recommendations that NHRIs and other domestic human rights actors can offer. We welcome that AIHRC Chairperson Shaharзад Akbar has been invited to address the Security Council and to speak at the Human Rights Council's panel today.

We are deeply concerned about the violations of the rights to life, freedom of movement, assembly, freedom of speech and expression which are being reported. Many Afghans are in need of international protection. We are gravely concerned at the situation of women and girls, minorities, especially Hazaras, and that of internally displaced persons, and call for their protection.

With monitoring activities likely to become increasingly challenging in Afghanistan, we join the call from AIHRC and that of many others for this Council to establish an independent investigative mechanism, with a broad multi-year mandate to monitor, report and document all human rights violations by all actors, and to regularly report its findings to the Human Rights and Security Councils. The mandate should include a gender focus.

The situation needs an urgent, unequivocal response from the international community to protect Afghan people's lives and dignity.

In the immediate, we urge States to intensify international cooperation to ensure safe passage of all those wishing to leave the country, in particular security at Kabul airport, for as long as required.

We urge all countries to allow civilians fleeing Afghanistan access to their territories, and to ensure respect of the principle of non-refoulement at all times. We encourage neighboring countries to keep their land borders open and ensure safe corridors.

Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland
www.ganhri.org



All claims of nationals and former habitual residents of Afghanistan seeking international protection should be processed in fast-tracked, and efficient procedures in accordance with international law.

We call on all parties to respect and protect human rights at all times.