

HAZARAS

Go to the GRAVEYARD

A Report on the Forced Migration and Genocide of
the Hazaras by the Taliban Terrorist Regime
in Balkh, Samangan and Sar-e-Pul

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Balkh is Executed

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A rope is hanging on the neck of our history (Afghanistan) and the secret to breaking it and crossing it lies in returning to the school of Balkh and its tradition of thought. Balkh had a bitter and contradicting fate and now this contradiction is standing in front of us in the form of a tragedy; it looks as if it demands something. Talking about Balkh is as difficult as a person's self-discovery, and more painful and mournful than the memory of any collective and individual pain. First, Balkh is the cradle and home of a civilization and rationality. The background of Balkh civil and traditional rationality as one of the most important centers of civilization goes back to more than six thousand years ago. However, written history of Balkh goes back to Avesta period, about 2600 years ago. Cultural territory of Balkh, both before and after Islamic culture, is of unique cultural and intellectual importance and validity. Post-Islamic Balkh although is hurt and injured of it; but it nurtures Islam in its lap changes it to a rich cultural process and it becomes "Mother of the Cities" of the Islamic era. Balkh enjoys equal status in the Eastern civilization, specially the Islamic culture and civilization, as Athens Enjoyed in the European civilization. Balkh shall be considered as the intellectual and cultural intellectual agora of the Islamic culture. Balkh as the strongest and sustainable spiritual geography is not inferior than Athens rather, it was equal to it. Plurality and tolerance are considered the most essential characteristics of this cultural and intellectual realm; In such a way that during twenty-two times of invasion and destruction, it resurrects itself like a phoenix from the fire of destruction and darkness. The fact that an intellectual realm can revive itself after the harshest hardships and coldness of the times and think about its renewal indicates its intellectual power and spiritual richness.

We see the first emergence of the idea of "Eternal Wisdom" in Balkh in the work of Hoshang Pishdadi of the same name, an idea that was later paid attention to by people like ibn Miskawayh at the height of the flourishing of Islamic culture, and Sheikh Ishraq, Yahya ibn Habash Suhrawardi (among others, made intellectual profit from it. Ironically, the wisdom section of Nahj al-Balagheh, which was collected by Sayyed Radhi, has a close similarity in form and content with the Eternal Wisdom. Anyway, the root of eternal wisdom or tainted wisdom, which gave the famous contemporary traditionalists an intellectual and spiritual essence and identity, also goes back to the cultural sphere of Balkh.

The role and status of Balkh in Islamic civilization is also fundamental. Balkh, or the geography that was called Khorasan after Islam, and Balkh is considered its main focus, has nurtured about three thousand scientists and writers from various fields. As a result, we are faced with a series of philosophers, mystics, poets, theologians, commentators, jurists, etc. in recent centuries. We should consider that Islamic victories happened less with spiritual and moral spirit; Rather, it showed more dominance, violence, and brutality. We want to say that the prosperity that occurred in the Islamic



1. Monastery of Bahawuddin Walad, father of Mawlana Jalaluddin Balkhi in Mazar-e- Sharif, capital of Balkh. Photo: social media

period in the Islamic world was mostly the product of the spirit of the people who, although they had just become Muslims, but before that they had a cultural, spiritual and moral spirit, and the intellectual, spiritual and moral creativity was the product of this spirit. Therefore, Balkh is one of those centers that before Islam had a unique and outstanding ethical, moral and intellectual spirit and thus it gave an identity to Islam in its epistemological and interpretive lap. As a result, Farabi and Ibn Sina, founded Islamic philosophy, the teachers who grew up in the cradle and mother city of Balkh. If not to say that the cultural spirit of Balkh prevails in the spirit of the translation movement as an Islamic renaissance; but, indeed it is one of its main pillars. In the field of theology of many Mu'tazili (sect of schismatics) and rationalist theologians have emerged Balkh, and the stream of rationalism generally originates from the spiritual realm of Balkh as thus one of the most rational jurist, theologian and philosopher has emerged from Balkh. If we consider the geography of the Persian language, Balkh is considered the most fundamental cradle and flourishing of the Persian language. Before and after Islam, Aryan/Dari language has been its main and academic language.

It is in Balkh and through the literary creations of this area that the Persian language shows its powerful richness. The cultural field of Persian language has no



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identity, both historically and scientifically, without the cultural fruits of Balkh.

Anyhow, the spiritual and practical sphere of ancient Balkh is now burning in the fire of disaster and destruction. The destruction, confusion, indecision and brutality that dominates Balkh, is originally rooted in the absence of the rational tradition of it. The Misery and destruction that drive us back each day and the mean requests for favors that are sent from around our wounded soul, indeed is rooted in forgetting the school and intellectual tradition of Balkh; That is, it originates from the self-estrangement of our soul.

The fact that destruction as our fate now makes others laugh drunkenly and they seek happiness from the helplessness and desperation of our historical existence and not on the grave where they trample on our bloodied corpses in any way, naturally returns to a childish and vindictive spirit. But returning to our homeland and our cultural spirit cannot be done in response to these dusty winds. On one hand it does mean returning to the past, but renewal of vows with the spirit standing beyond the time and thus one can ask for help and move towards the future.

Let's see the current theoretical and practical crisis in the mirror of the absence and forgetting of the rational tradition of Balkh. Getting caught up in the monster of corruption, war and looting was basically the product of turning our backs on the said territory. We find renewal and modernization in questioning and not being satisfied with the existing matter, and until something has not sat and experienced in our soul and spirit, going beyond it, is also meaningless. In any case, the cultural and spiritual territory of Balkh today has been invaded by the most irrational group and the most brutal racial-religious ideology. Currently killing, injustice, forced displacement, Land-grabbing feudalism and Predatory racial hegemony have been replaced with Balkh and its culture. Today, Balkh has forgotten itself and only with bloodshot eyes, it is watching the genocide and displacement on its torn and trampled body. Bamik's Balkh wears the cloak of

oblivion, silence and astonishment and has plunged into absolute darkness. The name of Balkh is now not tied to the culture of the past and its creations, but to massacres, destruction and displacement. In a sense, now Balkh is executed. We only want to remind you to study the report of killings and terror and forced migration these days in the territory of Balkh with attention to its background. After the advent of Islam, Balkh not only suffered spiritual and intellectual decline, but gradually its spiritual and artistic body was also accused, excommunicated, and from the end of the 19th century onwards, it was either destroyed or looted or like another part of its body (Bamiyan) collapsed from shame and became ashes. Now Balkh women fight with the deadliest terrorist regime for their basic human rights, but they are brutally abused and face serial murders. The most defenseless people in Balkhab are being massacred for no reason and many others are forcibly moved from their homes in Mazar e Sahrif and thrown into the heart of the darkest fate.

What happens to Balkh in the contemporary history, whether from the most extravagant leaders and People's political traders or now from the most terrorist ruling ideology, consciously or unknowingly, it targets the historical identity of Balkh. That's why Balkh, which was once the cradle of civilization in the east, has now turned into a pasture for desert wanderers and has changed its nature from city to wilderness. Not only the human crimes of the Taliban in Balkh, which are dismissed with silence and fear in all parts of Afghanistan, and not only in Afghanistan but in all countries, societies are held hostage and people are enslaved. But the answer to all this silence and squatting, fear and intimidation, irrationality and deception with all its connections will be nothing but collective disaster. In contemporary history, man has brought himself closer to disaster with every step; but the powerful states and the owners of high interests, leaders of the communities, submissive elites and Racist intellectuals are the main people who are blamed for such catastrophes.

HAZARAS

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A Report on the Forced Migration and Genocide of the Hazaras by the Taliban Terrorist Regime in Balkh, Samangan and Sar-e-Pul

By: **Mohammad Ahmady and Mohammad Rezaie**

Systematically killing of Hazaras in general in different parts of Afghanistan, and specially in Balkh is a clear reality that strictly continued during the second round of the Taliban rule and as a result the "Policy on Hazaras go to the grave" has been pursued in a steady manner. Travel of Sarajulddin Haqqani (the no 1 terrorist mastermind of the Taliban) On 10 June 2023, to Mazar e Sahrif and his attribute to the Taliban fighters who were killed during Mazar e Sharif invasion in 1988 and buried in Dashte Lalili, showed the firmed decision of the Taliban leader to pursue and mange genocide of other religious and ethnic groups under different pretext in the country. This controversial trip is somehow linked with the travel of Ashraf Ghani to Mazar e Sharif in the last days of his government which he compromised with the Taliban to sell Afghanistan to the Taliban, Pashtun elites understand it in the historical context of their relations; specially with keeping in mind that though Ghani had come to assess security situation in Balkh he actually had come to prevent an alliance between Atta Mohammad Noor, Dustam and Mohaqiq in the north Afghanistan against the Taliban and to accelerate the collapse of Mazar e Sharif, as one the most important provinces of the country. Keeping in mind the widespread attacks on Hazaras during the second round of the Taliban rule on Hazaras in Balkh, it shows that those who comported Afghanistan to the Taliban including Ghani are happy of the systematic killing of Hazaras. This is the ideal situation Pashtun elites hope for and has been outlined in a book titled "the Second Saqawi." The continued efforts of Pashtun elites including Pashtun rulers during the republic (Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani) and Taliban leaders denying the genocide of Hazaras prove our claim.

The following target killings of Hazaras in the northern provinces of Afghanistan during the second round of the Taliban government (2021-2023) show that Hazaras are a legitimate target for different terrorists groups including the Taliban.

1. Forced Migration of Hazara in Mazar e Sharif

First- Qubatul Islam:

Ettelatroz published a report on 11 October 2021 stating that armed men based on an ordinance of Mazar e Shatrif security command have given Hazara residents

of Qubatul Ismam a one-week deadline to evacuate this area.

On 11 October 2021, the daily Ettilatroz had written in a report that the irresponsible armed people had given the residents of the Hazara area of Qabaul Islam in Mazar-e-Sharif a week to evacuate the area under the order of the Taliban security command.

The outlet citing a resident of Qubatu; Islam wrote "armed of Koshi tribe" have demolished some houses on the 13th street of Qubatul Isma based on the ordinance of Balkh security command of the Taliban."

When some residents of Qubatul Ismal reported the case to the Taliban authorities they told the people that they could submit their case to the Taliban court in 5 days and then the court will redress it. But some Taliban members warned the residents of Qubatul Islam to leave the area without considering the complaints of the people.

According to the Silk Way Weekly, Qubatul Islam area has been a matter of conflict in the former governments too. However, the courts had always settled the case in the favor of Hazaras because they held legal documents and sharia entitles that show Hazaras owned these lands 85 years ago.

Human Rights Watch affirmed on 22 October 2001 that armed members of Koshi tribe had threatened the residents of Qubatul Islam with the support of the Taliban.

Second- Aliabad Township: Local sources familiar with the matter reported on 24 October 2001 that some Pashtuns



2. Aliabad, a Hazara populated area Mazar-e- Sharif

from Khost province have threatened residents of Aliabad Township to evacuate this area because its lands belonged to them. At the same Time Ettelatroz reported that some people of Khost province supported by the Taliban have threatened the residents of "Aliabad Township" to evacuate this township. According to this report Khost residents had claimed 230 hectares of this area belonged to them and Taliban had supported their claim without assessing it by the courts."

Based on this report Taliban had detained some residents of Aliabad Township of Mazar e Sharif. However, the documents of Khost residents showed that they had seized these land during the first round of the Taliban rule by killing Hazaras and making them to leave the area by force. But Hazaras documents showed they had owned these lands several decades ago.

However, Taliban supporting the Khost Pashtuns, continued harassing Hazaras after it was proved their land documents were legal and started their house to house search and according to the reliable sources they detained 9 Hazaras from this area. Aliabad Township is located in north east of Mazar e Sharif.

According to the findings of the Silk Way Weekly, after the collapse of the republic in August 2021, two Pashtun residents of Khost province claimed they own the lands of Aliabad Township and as a result the have entitles and Hazaras shall leave the area.

Local sources in Aliabad confirming the warning said "About 230 hectares was mentioned in their {Khsot Pashtuns} entitles but is was issued during the first round of the Taliban rule."

Based on these findings, Taliban had summoned a number of the elders of Aliabad Township to provide them information about the Claim of Khost Pashtuns. However, the documents of Hazaras showed they had been issued before the first round of the Taliban rule. But Taliban had told these elders that entitles of Hazaras do not include all the lands of Aliabad Township. As a result, they either shall pay the fees of those lands which are not included in the entitles or shall evacuate them. Hazaras elders have gone to Kabul authorities for several times to stop the illegal proceedings of the Taliban local authorities but it is not clear whether Kabul officials would take a serious on action this matter or not. Therefore, there is hope for a just and fair solution for such conflicts under the Taliban rule.

2. Suicide Attacks on Hazara Areas in Balkh Province

1) Suicide attack on worshipers in Se Dukan mosque (March 2022)

Se Dukan mosque is one of the oldest and biggest mosques of Shiites in Mazar e Sharif. When worshipers were praying in the mosque on April 21, 2022, a suicide bomber attacked the worshipers. According to Balkh sources 37 were killed and 65 were injured in the attack; but the eyewitnesses and some foreign sources say that more than 50 were killed and about 100 were injured in the attack.

Mohammad Ali (given name) one of the worshipers and eyewitnesses of the deadly suicide attack told the Silk Way



Terrorist attack on Se Dukan Mosque, Mazar-e-Sahrif/ Photo: social media

Weekly that "We were praying when the suicide attack was carried out and there was a huge explosion. The pieces of the shattered glasses were on roof. The body of many worshippers who were killed and injured were on the roof of the mosque. Those who had survived the attack were running out to different directions worriedly and most of them had rushed to the gate of the mosque to save their lives."

Mohammad Hassan (Fake Name) a source familiar with military matters said that the reason why there are contradicting figures about the casualties of the attack on Se Dukan mosques is that Taliban deny the real number of casualties deliberately to showcase security is maintained in Afghanistan and specially the vulnerable religious and ethnic groups are protected by the Taliban. As a result, Taliban have restricted free media to prevent free flow of information and the number of the casualties the Taliban officials share with the media are far less than the actual number the eyewitnesses report.

Doctor. Farahmand from Abne Sina regional hospital in Mazar e Sharif says that some of the people who are injured may pass away due to injuries and it increases the number of the casualties of the suicide attacks while the official only cite the preliminary casualties.

Maintaining the security of the schools, mosques, and other public spaces of the Shiites has been one of the main demands of the Shiites from the Taliban after the seized power again. Though the Taliban officials have repeatedly promised to protect these public spaces they have failed to fulfill it so far. Some people familiar with the matter say that some Taliban officials are involved in attacks on Shiites public spaces. Taliban killed Hazaras in the first round of their government in different parts of Afghanistan and they staged target killings on Hazaras during the republic and they were facilitated by Ashraf Ghani men in the National Intelligence General Directorate.

2) Two consecutives suicide attacks rocked Hazara residential areas in Kare Sultan Baba Ali Shir in police district 5 and Karte Ariana in Alichoopan, Mazar (25 May 2002).

10 people were killed and 18 wounded in 3 separate suicide attacks on passenger vehicles in Mazar e Sharif on 25 May 2002.

Local sources familiar with the matter told the Silk Way Weekly in Mazar e Sharif that these attacks occurred in Hazara residential areas in Kart e Sultan Bab Alishir in police district five, and Kart e Arian of Alichoopan.

The Taliban authorities in Balkh told media that 9 people were killed and 15 were injured in consecutive attacks in Mazar e Sharif.

At the same time, Ettilatroz outlet reported that 9 people were killed and more than 40 were injured.... **...More on next page**



1. Qubatul Islam, a Hazara populated area in Mazar-e- sharif/ image source: Ettilatroz daily



Etilaatroz wrote “the condition of some of the people who were injured was not good citing Ghawsuddin Anwari the head of Abu Ali Sina hospital. According to the report some of the people who were injured had lost their legs in the attack.”

Findings of the Silk Way Weekly show that Ms. Madadi and a young doctor named Hussain Nasery died due to severe injuries in the hospital one day after the attack.



Salaamvatandar reported citing the eyewitnesses that the explosives had been detonated in two passenger vehicles. According to this report the number of the casualties was more than the number by the officials and all those who were killed and injured were civilians.

ISKP accepted the responsibility for the attack.

Findings of the Silk Way Weekly show that the main cause of the target attacks on Hazaras is tense prejudice of Pashtuns against Hazaras. Among the Taliban leaders, there are a number of high ranking officials who promote shattered against through mosques, mass media and social media and even some of the issue fatwa against Hazaras and call them “infidels” and provoke Sunnis against Shiites. That’s why killing Hazaras does not stop in no government. Even if suicide bombers accept the responsibility of the attacks, the attackers are Pashtuns who are strongly supported by all political and religious groups of Pashtuns.

C) Two consecutive explosions in Hazara populated areas in Mazar e Shari- Sajjadia sation and containers (18 May 2022)

On 18 May 2022, local sources told the



Two consecutive explosions in Hazara populated areas in Mazar e Shari- Sajjadia sation and containers \ Photo: social media.

Silk Way Weekly that two consecutive explosions occurred in Hazara residential areas in Sajadia bus station and containers killing 9 and wounding 13.

The Taliban police chief confirmed the attack killing 9 and injuring 13 in Hazara populated areas of Mazar e Sharif.

Mohammad Mohaqiq the leader of Hezbe Wahdat e Mardom Afghanistan (United Party of the Afghanistan people)

had cited the number of the casualties more than the official figures. “The criminal hands of takfiri terrorists created another crime and killed and injured many innocent Hazaras in Mazar e Sharif. Local people say 11 people have been killed and 18 have been wounded.” There have been one child, two women and 8 men among the those who were killed in the attack.

Local sources reported that Taliban had misbehaved with the families of the victims while moving their bodies to the hospital. A familiar source with the matter told the Silk Way Weekly then that “When the families of the victims tried to go the suicide attack to save their dear ones, Taliban hit them with the back of guns and prevent them to help the injured people.”

ISKP accepted the responsibility of the attack ultimately. However the findings of the Silk Way show that ISKP is a cover for ethnic and racial prejudices of the Taliban group and they use ISKP for target attacks against Hazaras.

3. Target Attacks of Hazaras in Mazar e Sharif

1) local sources reported on 2 January 2021 to the Silk Way Weekly that Taliban had shot killed a Hazara employee of the former government in Mazar e Sharif.

Based on the findings of the Silk Way Weekly the victim was named Abdul Malik and was the main resident of Alichoopan, Mazar e Sharif.

Juma Khan (given name) told the Silk Way Weekly that “Abdul Malik” had been threatened several times before he was killed.



Abdul Malik shot in Mazar-e-Sharif / Photo: Image sent to the Silk Way.

2) Local sources form Chimtal district of Balkh reported the Silk Way Weekly on 3 April 2022 armed killed all members of a family in Jarqala village of Chimatal district. Findings of the Silk Way show that the victims included one man, one woman, two young girls, two boys, 6 and 4.



According to this report the man, head of the family, named Abdul Hussain was the main resident of Spich Smidan of Kohistanat district, Sar-e-Pol but he has lived in Jarqala village of Chimtal.

According to the eyewitnesses, Abdul Hussain and his family members were brutally killed by knife and gun. Only a 2-year old injured girl of the family survived.

Some sources familiar with the matter said Taliban fighters were involved in the murdering of Abdul Hussain; but the Taliban police in Balkh in a statement said they incident was under investigations yet.

Sabir Qezelbash (fake name), a resident of Jarqala village, told the Silk Way weekly that people close to the Taliban were involved in the killing of this family.

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA) quoting a reliable source reported that the perpetrators have been the guest of the family at the night the family members were killed. They had killed all the family members of having dinner with them.

Mukhtar Wafayee, a freelance reporter of Independent Persian, wrote on the incident: “The spokespersons of the Taliban try to prevent free flow of information about criminal incidents in order to portray the situation is under control and everything is Okay, but in most cases of the murders, Taliban or the armed people who are close to Taliban are involved in the killings”.

3) Murdering a young doctor in Mazar e Sharif

Local sources familiar with the matter told the Silk Way Weekly that a young doctor was killed mysteriously by gun shot on 31 January 2022 in Mazar e Sharif.



Mohammad Shafi Nazari killed in Mazar / Photo: social media.

The spokesperson of the Taliban told media that “Mohammad Shafi Nazari” the main resident of Sayedabad of Mazar e Sharif, police district 7, had gone out of home with a corolla vehicle to meet his friends, but he had been disappeared on the way and his body was found two days later.

Based on the findings of the Silk Way Weekly the body of Nazari was found while parts of his body were cut off with knife. The perpetrator was not identified ever. But some sources familiar with the matter told the Silk Way Weekly that Taliban were involved in the individual murders.

Etilaatroz citing its sources in Mazar e Sharif said Mohammad Shafi Nazari was disappeared two days ago and his body was found on 31 Januray 2002 in Mazar Sharif.

E) Murdering a young man in Mazar e Sahrif

Local sources in Balkh told the Silk Way Weekly on 8 October 2022 that unknown armed had shot killed young Hazara man named Hussain Karimi in Balkhab district, Sar-e-Pol.

Based on this report a number of girl and boy university students had protested on Kaaj Education Center suicide attack in Mazar e Sharif but Taliban had immediately detained them. However, Hussain Karimi, Uncle of Mortaza Karimi, the student of Journalism faculty of Balkh university who was detained by Taliban along with other protesting students, had gone to

All members of a family shot in Chimtal district of Balkh / Photo: Socual Media.

the intelligence of the Taliban to gain information about Mortza Karimi.

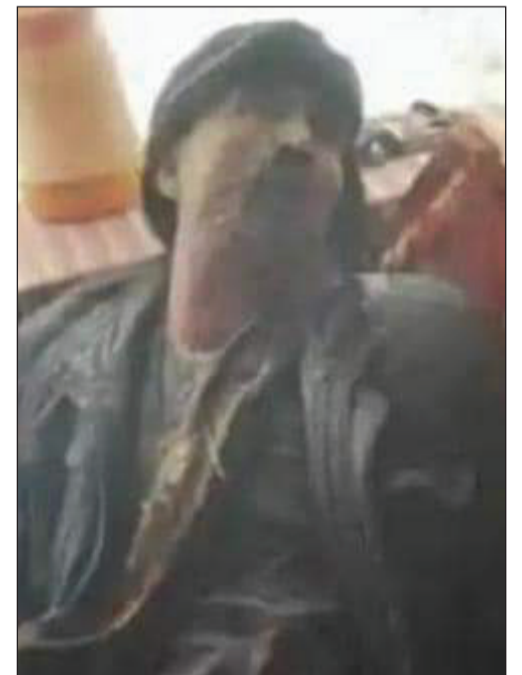


Hussain Karimi, uncle of Mortaza Karimi, student of Balkh university shot by the Taliban. Photo: social media.

Local sources familiar with the matter say that Hussain Karimi who had gone to the Taliban intelligence to have information about his missing nephew, first had been detained by the Taliban and then he had been brutally killed by them. Hussain Karimi was the main resident of Ashtarlai district, Daikondi, and lived in Balkh. Ten months has passed since Karimi was killed but nobody has been detained in connection with this case.

F) Taliban shot killed a man in Dawlatabad of Mazar e Sharif

Local sources reported on January 30 2002 that a man named Abdul Hussain but nicknamed Khalifa Hussian was shot killed on Dawlatabad- MazarSharif route by the Taliban.



Abdul Hussain, nicknamed Khalifa Hussian, killed on Dawlatabad- Mazar-e-sharif route by the Taliban. Photo: social media.

Etilaatroz citing its sources in Balkh wrote “Khalifa Hussain was going to Mazare Sharif to follow up the case of his brother Rajab Ebrahimi, who had spent in jail for 9 months charged with marrying out of group marriage with a Pashtun woman named Gulandam but he was shot and killed on the way to Mazar e Sharif.

Local sources said at that time Rajab Ebrahimi was killed by Gulandam’s brothers with the help of the Taliban. Rajab Ebrahimi, 50, from Hazara ethnic group, had married Gulandam , 40, from a Pash-tun family of Balkh district fifteen years ago and they have now 4 children.



Rajab Ebrahimi and Gulandam

Independent Persian had quoted relatives of Rajab Ebrahimi and Gulandam in a report: “They had married 15 years ago in the face of religious and ethnic differences; but Gulandam’s brothers and relatives always threatened them. They were impris-

oned in 2006 based on the complaints of Gulandam brothers. But the court voted in the favor of Guananda and her husband and they were released. But Gulandam's brothers continued putting them in trouble".

After the collapse of the republic Gulandam's brothers complained against Gulandam and her husband again. While they wanted to immigrate to Pakistan, they were detained by the Taliban intelligence in Kabul and they were imprisoned and tortured.

While prosecuting Ebrahimi, Taliban had frequently asked him "You are a Hazara and Shiite" and how could you dare to marry a Pashtun Sunni woman?"

According to some sources who were the medium between him and his family, Rajab had asked them to bring him some Hanafi religious books, then he had read them and announced to Taliban that he had become Sunni. Finally, Rajab was released from the Taliban prison".

Independent Persian I a report cited Ebrahimi: "In the last session of the court the judge asked different questions of Hanafi religion in order to ensure Rajab had converted to Hanafi religion and had no religious issues with Gulandam and the answers of Ebrahimi had satisfied the judge, he had studied Hanafi religious books very carefully in the prison. As a result, the judge while confirming the verdict of the court of the previous government regarding Rajab and Gulandam's marriage, issued the sentence of their release".

Now, Rajab and Gul Andam have been released from the prison of Taliban and have gone to Iran illegally in January 2022. But the Taliban have not taken any action regarding the arrest of the perpetrators of Khalifa Hussein's murder.

Targeted killing of Hazaras in Samangan province

Six coal workers were shot on the Mazar-e-Sharif-Dare Suf highway (April 2022)

1) Local sources reported on 26 April 2022 reported that unknown armed men shot killed seven Hazara workers in Dare Suf district of Samangan province.



Seven coal workers shot on the Mazar-e-Sharif-Dare Suf highway / Photo: social media.

The Taliban officials in Balkh, while confirming this incident, told the media that unknown armed people first took 7 people out of a car in Dare Suf district of Samangan and took them to a valley, and then shot and killed five of them.

Germany's Deutsche Welle news agency, citing local officials, reported that the number of dead was five. According to this source to DW: "Four people were killed, one person was injured and another person survived the massacre and escaped." According to this report, the victims of this event were all Hazaras and Shiites.

At the same time as this incident occurred, Mohammad Mohaqeq, the leader of the Islamic Unity Party of the People of Afghanistan, who knew the elders of this

village closely, while confirming this incident, published the names of the victims on his Facebook page as follows: "Khairullah son of Muhammad Rahim, Gholam Sakhi son of Chaman, Khalifa Sarwar son of Safar, Muhammad Yunus son of Muhammad Ali, and Baz Mohammad son of Ahmad Ali."



The killing of Hazara workers, who are the most innocent people of Afghanistan, reveals the fact that ethnic and religious discrimination, which started systematically since the formation of the country called Afghanistan, continues with full force by the political elites. Apparently, the predominantly ethnic governments have always aimed at massacring the Hazaras in order to unite the Afghan society religiously, but in fact, the complete destruction of the Hazaras and the occupation of their lands by the Pashtuns has been followed as an unchanging strategy since the time of Abdul Rahman.

Even during the Republican regime, the targeted killing of Hazaras increased compared to many other periods, and with the re-establishment of the Taliban's control over Afghanistan, the systematic killing of Hazaras continues with greater intensity throughout Afghanistan. The killing of 6 Hazara coal mine workers on the Mazar-e-Sharif-Dare Suf highway with American M-16 and Russian Mikarov weapons in Samangan and the occurrence of dozens of suicide attacks during the second round of the Taliban rule can be examined from this perspective.

Gharjestani, a university professor, believes that by killing Hazara workers, terrorist groups want to send a message to the Hazara people and the Shiites of Afghanistan that not only mosques, and religious places of Shiites are not safe; Rather, they do not allow them anywhere to work and live with a calm mind; Even if it is in the worst places and the hardest work, such as working in mines and coal mining.

In addition, there are various reasons for targeting millennials by terrorist groups. Hassan Rezaei, a university professor, considers narrow interpretations of religion and authoritarian ethnic approaches in the form of religion to be among the main factors of terrorist attacks against Hazaras.

Some other knowledgeable people say that although the Taliban leaders always talk about the unity of this group, in fact, this group has internal differences and some of them have a more extreme view towards religious, and ethnic minorities. Therefore, certain parts of the Taliban are either directly involved in this attack or cooperate with other terrorist groups to carry out suicide attacks against Hazaras and Shiites.

2) The killing of a young girl by the Taliban in Samangan province (6 November 2022)



The killing of a young girl by the Taliban in Samangan province / Photo: social media.

On November, 2022, local sources from Samangan reported that a young girl was killed by one of the leaders of the Taliban group in Dare Suf of Samangan.

According to these sources, the killer was one of the Taliban agents and his name was Mullah Yasin. At the time of committing the crime, he was the Head of the moral police of the Taliban in Dare Suf Paecen district, Samangan province.

According to this report, Mullah Yasin's main motive for killing this girl was his lack of consent to marry this member of the Taliban group.

According to the findings of the Silk Way Weekly, this girl was imprisoned by the Taliban for about 24 hours in Shulgarah district of Balkh province and was released after she refused to marry Mullah Yasin. But she was immediately killed by a member of the Taliban

3) Taliban shot killed two brothers in Dare Suf district, Samangan

Local sources reported that Taliban shot killed two brothers named Awaz and Mohammad in Dare Suf district on February 2021.



Mohammad and Ewaz, the two brothers shot in Daresuf, Samangan / Photo: social media.

According to these sources, the Taliban killed these two brothers for the crime of being members of the security forces of the republic government, and one of their younger brothers, who witnessed this terrible incident, is also in a coma due to nervous shock.

4) A doctor was killed in Dare Suf district of Samangan

Local sources reported that unknown armed men shot killed a Hazara doctor in Dare Suf district on 14 February 2022.

According to local sources, Dr. Najmuddin Sohrabi, the head of Dare Suf Bala Hospital, was killed at night in her house by four people armed with hunting weapons

Salam Watandar Farsi media reported in a report quoting its sources in Samangan said that unknown people killed a doctor in Dara Suf district, Samangan. This doctor, whose name was Najmuddin Sohrabi, had worked as a doctor in the 30-bed hospital of Dara Suf Bala district for about five years. Her two children have survived the attack.

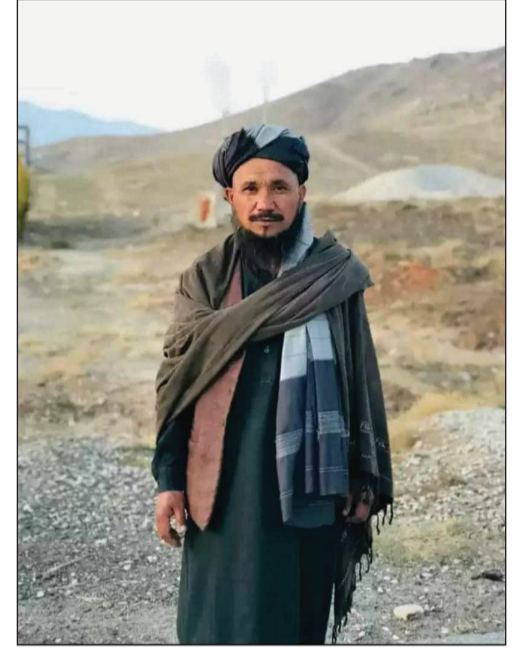
In connection with the mysterious murders in the northern provinces of Afghanistan, Mohaqiq, the leader of the Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan, wrote on his Facebook page that despite the announcement of amnesty, the Taliban group killed the residents of Chaharkent and Dare Suf Bala districts in a revengeful and spiteful way. Mohaqiq further wrote that



the Taliban arrest, torture and imprison the people of these districts and then demand money and weapons from them in exchange for their release.

5) A farmer was shot killed in Rue Duab district, Samangan

Independent Paersian citing its sources in Samangan wrote that the Taliban intelligence in Samangan shot killed a person named Jamaluddin in Rue DUab district of Samangan on 13 June 2023.



Jamaluddin, a farmer and the main resident of Rue Duab district, Samangan, shot by an armed militia / Source: Independent Persian

It is said that Jamaluddin was a farmer and a resident of Rue Doab district, who was constantly harassed by the Taliban forces on the charge of having weapons.

According to Independent Persian report, when Jamaluddin learns that Sirajuddin Haqqani, the Taliban's Minister of Internal Affairs, has traveled to the city of "Aibak", the center of Samangan, and has a meeting with the elders of this city, he tries to convey his complaints to him; But he was arrested by Taliban intelligence and then shot by a militia named Qari Muawiyah.

Killing Hazaras In Sar-e-Pol Province Taliban staged their bloodiest attack in Sar-e-Pol province. on 5 August 2017 This group attacked Mirza Olang village in Sayad Sar-e-Pol district at night using light and semi-heavy weapons. Local sources said 62 people were killed in the joint Taliban ISKP attack.

The number of victims of this event was leaked to the media when, based on the statements of the local officials of the former government in Sar-e-Pol, several mass graves were discovered in this village after Mirzaavlang was recaptured by the former security forces.

According to this report, security forces after investigations of the bodies of the victims found that most of the victims who were shot killed and beheaded were civilian including 3 youngsters from 8 to 15.

Zabihullah Amani, the spokesman of the then governor of Sar-e-Pol, announced in a conversation with the media that most of the victims of the Mirzaavlang incident were men; But among their bodies, the bodies of three teenage boys, who looked to be between 8 and 15 years old, were also seen.

A few days after the tragedy of Mirza Olang, local sources in Sar-Dr. Najmuddin Sohrabi, the head of Dare Suf Bala Hospital, was killed at night in her house by four people armed with hunting weapons / Photo: social media.

↳ e-pol reported the discovery of two mass graves in this village and said that most of the victims were beheaded by rebels and fighters.

The spokesman of the then governor of Sar-e-Pol told the media that the bodies of 36 people were discovered from two mass graves in the village of Mirzaavlang. But later, the ISIS group announced by publishing a message that their forces have killed more than 50 people in this area. But the local sources of Sar-e-Pol had reported the number of victims as more than 60 civilians.

Zabihullah Amani, the spokesman of the governor of Sar-e-Pol at that time, announced in a conversation with the media that in addition to the two mass graves discovered, the location of another mass grave has also been determined. But since that area is still under the control of the rebels, we cannot estimate how many men, women or children are buried there.

On 16 August 2017, the funeral ceremony of 25 victims of Mirzaavlang village was held in the center of Sar-e-Pol with the presence of local authorities and a large number of residents of this province.

Although the Taliban attributed this attack to ISKP; But the findings of the Silk Way Weekly show that the Taliban have committed this heinous crime against Hazara civilians. Later, the ISIS group took responsibility for attacking the village of Mirza Olang and killing civilians by publishing newsletters.

The people of Sarpul province have witnessed bloody and shocking events after the Taliban regained control of this province. The Balkhab war, which led to the killing of nearly 100 military and civilian people, including women and children, is considered one of the bloodiest events in this province. What follows is a description of examples of bloody crimes committed against the Hazara people in the second term of Taliban rule in Sar-e-Pul province:

On March 2 2022, local sources in Sarpul Province reported to the Silk Road that the body of a woman was found in a well in the center of this province. According to sources, this woman who was missing four days ago, her body was found in the septic tank of her house after a long search. Taliban forces arrested the rival wife of the killed woman and her two sons on the charge of murdering this woman. Apparently, the reason for killing this woman by the Taliban was family violence.

Local authorities of the Taliban in Sar-e-Pol announced on 5 November 2002 that unknown armed men killed a man in Sayad district, Sar-e-Pol. The victim was named Mohammad Naeim and was the main resident of ANgashka village, Sayad district. Din Mohammad Nazari, the spokesman of the Taliban group's police headquarters for Sar-e-Pul Province, told the media that this person was first tortured and then suffocated by his handkerchief. However, no one was arrested by the Taliban in connection with this incident, and the motive for Mohammad Naeim's murder has not been clarified yet.

On December 16, 1401, local sources in Sar-e-Pul province reported that a member of a special unit of the former government security forces was killed in Sar-e-Pul province. According to this report, the dismembered body of this former security forces member was published by Facebook users on the mentioned date. The killed person, whose name was Sattar Sirat, was first kidnapped by unknown people on the Mazar-e-Sharif-Sar-e-Pol road about a week before, and a little later his dismembered body was found near the same area. Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman of the Taliban group in Kabul, denied the news

of Sattar Sirat's murder. But local sources in Sar-e-Pol had confirmed the news of his death and the victim's family also confirmed the news of Sirat's death. But they refused to provide the details of his murder to the media.

On January, 2022, local sources in Sar-e-Pol reported to the media that a man killed his fiancée and his fiancée's mother with a knife in Sancharak district of Sar-e-Pol province. According to this report, the accused, whose name was Sadruddin, had fled from the area after committing the murder. The local officials of the Taliban in Sar-e-Pol province, while confirming this incident, told the media that efforts are underway to arrest the accused person; But now that more than a year has passed since that incident, there is no news about the arrest of the killer.

On 1 April 2003, Local sources in Sar-e-Pol reported that two shepherd children were killed mysteriously by unknown armed men when they had taken the sheep to the desert in Gosfandi district, Sar-e-Pol. According to the report, Wahid and Mohammad Yunous, were 8 and 10 years old.

The district governor of Taliban in Gosfandi district, while confirming this news, told the media that these two children were killed with stones and knives in a gruesome manner. According to local Taliban officials, two suspects have been arrested by their forces in connection with this case. But so far, there is no information about the trial and punishment of the suspects and their motive for killing these two children.

On 16 April 3023, local sources in Sar-e-Pol reported that a man named Gulabuddin was killed by unknown armed men in Sar-e-Pol. The local officials of the Taliban have confirmed the incident.

However, some sources reported that the victim was attack by unknown armed while he had gone to irrigate his land at night. The local officials of the Taliban in Sar-e-Pol while confirming the incident said they had arrested one man in connection with this incident. But according to the findings of the Silk Way Weekly, there is no news of the trial and punishment of the murderer.

On July 2022, local sources in Sar-e-Pol reported that about 80 girl students have been poisoned. One of the Taliban authorities confirming the incident said they were grade one to grade 6 students and he cited the local enmity among the local people as the main motive behind the incident. As a result, nobody has been arrested in connection with this incident. so far, some sources said the local officials of the Taliban have taken no measures to arrest the



About 80 girl students have been poisoned in Sar e Pul \ Photo: social media



About 80 students poisoned

perpetrators.

On 5 October 2022, Sources in Sar-e-Pol Province had reported that in two separate incidents, the bodies of a man and a woman were found in the center of Sar-e-Pol Province. Simultaneously with the occurrence of this incident, the local officials of the Taliban group in Sar-e-Pol province confirmed through a conversation with some media that they found the body of a man and a woman in one of the neighborhoods of the center of Sar-e-Pol province. The Taliban had stated that the reason for the woman's murder was a family dispute, but they further said that the reason for the man's murder was not known. So far, no one has been arrested in connection with these two murders.

On 20 June 2023, local sources of Sar-e-Pol province had reported that a Hazara man was shot dead by unknown armed men in Mirzaavalang area of Sayad district of Sar-e-Pul province. The Taliban's police headquarters in Sar-e-Pul province confirmed this incident by publishing a newsletter and further said that the killed person's name was Ramadan and he worked as a dealer. The motive of Ramadan's murder has not yet been determined and no one has been arrested in connection with this case.

On 20 June 2023, local sources in Sar-e-Pol had reported that the body of a man, who missed four days ago, was found in Proshan village of Balkhab. Local media reported that the man was named Ghulam Hussain and was the head of Proshan village.

Local sources cited personal hostilities as the motive of the murder of nobody has been arrested in connection with this case yet.

11) On 13 May 2023, local source in Balkhab reported that the Taliban forces had killed Mohammad Ehsani, a Hazara

influential man of Balkhab. The findings of the Silk Road show that the Taliban, after a day and night of torture, delivered the body of this ethnic influencer to Abu Ali Sinai Balkhi Hospital in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Hasht Sobh newspaper also quoted its local sources in Balkhab and wrote that on Wednesday, 3rd of May 2023, the Taliban intelligence arrested Mohammad Hossein Ehsani, the village head and influential of Balkhab district, from Mazar-e-Sharif and killed him after a day and night of torture.

Mohammad Mohaqiq, the leader of the



Mohammad Hossein Ehsani, the village head and influential of Balkhab district, shot by the Taliban \ Photo: social media.

Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan wrote on his Facebook page that Mr. Ehsani was deceived by the guarantees of some of Balkhab local Taliban and the general amnesty the group had announced and as a result he had surrendered to the Taliban.

Mohammad Balkhabi (Nick name), a local influential of Balkhab told the Silk Way that the murder of Ehsani was connected to Mawlawi Mahdi's issue. Because while Mahdawi was fighting with the Taliban in Balkhab, Hussain Ehsani had close relations with Quddpsi, a representative of Mawlawi Mahdi and was considered as one of the people loyal to him.

Although the Taliban have not yet commented on the arrest and killing of this ethnic influencer; However, Mohammad Mohaqiq, the leader of the Islamic Unity Party of the People of Afghanistan, on his Facebook page, called the killing of Mr. Ehsani a part of the systematic killing of Mujahideen and public figures by the Taliban.

However, despite the fact that the leadership of the Taliban announced general amnesty in Afghanistan; but their fighters have been detaining, torturing and killing the former government security members, ethnic influential figures, and intellectual opponents of the Taliban.

Madness of Femicide

A report of targeted assassinations of women by the Taliban in Balkh

By: Razia Roshani

Translated by: Mohammad Rezaie

After taking control of the situation in Balkh, the Taliban committed many crimes against the residents of this province. But in the meantime, in addition to the fact that women have always been the subject of repression and restrictions due to their gender, their protest against the restrictions imposed by the Taliban has also increased violence and discrimination against them, and they have been targeted for killing by the Taliban terrorist group.

In the following report, we discuss some prominent cases of Taliban violence against women and their killing in the past two years:

After a few months of taking over Balkh by the Taliban, the Taliban forces shot four female civil activists in Mazar-e-Sharif, the capital of this province.

Fatemah-fake name-, the head of one of the government departments of former government, told the Silk Way Weekly that the Taliban called four women's rights activists in Mazar-e-Sharif on behalf of the employees of human rights organizations and told them to go to the airport because their flight to America has been arranged. He adds: "Four women, who were friends, take their luggage and say goodbye to their family members; and then they move towards Maulana Jala-luddin Balkhi Airport." Fatemah says that the Taliban kidnapped these four women on the way to the airport, then took them to an unknown place, and after four days, their bodies were found in the outskirts of Mazar-e-Sharif. She adds: "Unfortunately, after four days, the body of one of them was found. His whole body was full of bullets. Then the bodies of all of them were found. They had shot everyone; They even had scratched their faces." According to Fatemah, after this event, civil society and human rights organizations shared five numbers with women's rights activists in Balkh and asked them to never answer calls from these numbers.

Khadija -fake name -, in connection with the killing of four women's rights activists in Mazar-e-Sharif, told the Silk Way Weekly: "On October 27, 2021, the bodies of five female civil activists were found in the suburbs of Khalid bin Waleed settlement. Among them, one of them was Forozan Safi, a civil activist and professor at Balkh University,



One of the four shot women, Forozan Safi, was a professor at Balkh University and a women's rights activist in Mazar-e-Sharif. Photo: social media.



The bloody stairs of a female soldier's house in Mazar-e-Sharif, who was shot by the Taliban. Photo: Social Networks

and the other was Maryam Hamraz, who was in charge of a cultural institution in the previous government. According to her, at that time only the news of Forozan Safi's death was published through the media.

The findings of the Silk Way show that Maryam Hamraz was in charge of a cultural institution during the Republican period and had no role in the protest march against the Taliban in Mazar-e-Sharif. The findings show that Ms. Hamraz belonged to the Balkh Tajik ethnic group. On the other hand, it is still not clear for what reason they killed Forozan Safi and three other civil activists at the same time. At that time, the Taliban had denied the accusation of killing these four women; But knowledgeable sources told the Silk Way that they were killed by Taliban forces.

On October 13, 2021, the BBC wrote, quoting Afghan civil activists: "Four women who were colleagues and friends were kidnapped a few days ago near Maulana Jala-luddin Balkhi Airport, and four days later, on



Fatema and Sharifa, the two young girls whom their bodies were found in Shadyan passage, Mazar-e-Sahrif. Photo: Social Media Networks.

October 27, their bodies were found in a suburban pit in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif. The BBC quoted Amina Haqparbat, a civil activist in Mazar-e-Sharif who now lives in Germany, and wrote that one of these four women, Forozan Safi, was a professor at Balkh University and a women's rights activist in Mazar-e-Sharif.

2. On 5 November 2021, the BBC wrote in a report that in a video tape circulating on social networks, it can be seen that Taliban forces entered the house of a female former member of the security forces in the previous regime, killed her along with another woman and two male relatives. In this video tape, it is said that the Taliban entered the house of this female former security member at night and killed a woman and two other men. It can also be seen in the video that the stairs of this woman's house are covered in blood.

At the same time, Eitlatroz reported on 6 November 2021, quoting a civil activist in Balkh that the Taliban had killed these four women. But Abdullah Haqmal, the head of police district 5 of the Taliban confirmed that the police had detained two people in connection with this incident and said the incident occurred on 4 November 2021 and cited the domestic violence as the motive of

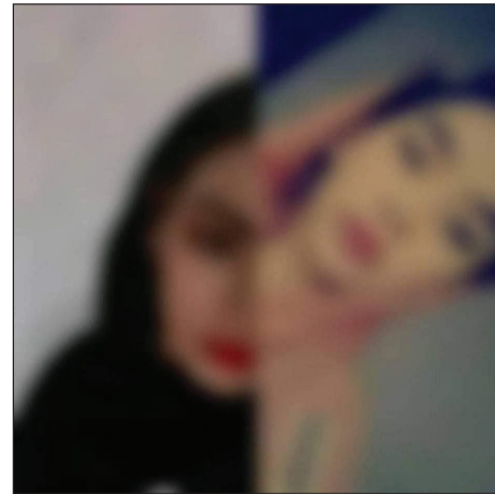
the murder.

Bilal Karimi, Deputy spokesperson of the Taliban, at the time told media that "This incident occurred in PD5 of Mazar e Sharif and 40 bodies, two men and two women, were found in a house."

It was said the incident had happened in Faqirabad, Mazar e Sharif. Saeid Khosti the previous spokesperson of the Ministry of Interior of the Taliban a tweet message said on 6 November 2021, two people were detained in connection with the incident from Faqirabad area.

3. Local sourced told media on 6 March 2021 that the bodies of two young girls were found in Tangi Sahdyan of Balkh. It added that one of the was killed with a bullet and the other one was suffocated.

Zahra-fake name- told the Silk Way Weekly that the names of the two girls were



Fatema and Sharifa, the two young girls whom their bodies were found in Shadyan passage, Mazar-e-Sahrif. Photo: Social Media Networks.

Fatema and Sharifa and they lived in Karte Wahdat, an area where Shiites live there. "They went to the school in the morning and they never returned home."

The findings of the Silk Way Weekly show that the bodies of Fatema and Sharifa were found after a week by a gardener named Nader in Tangi Shadyan. The local residents call the relevant district and inform the Taliban about the discovery of the girls' bodies; But the Taliban does not pay attention to it.

Other sources in Karte wahdat of Mazar-e-Sharif told the Silk Way that the Taliban arrested and then killed Fatema and Sharifa on the pretext of not observing the hijab required by this group. The findings of the Silk Way show that Fatema and Sharifa belonged to the Hazara ethnic group.

4. The Taliban forces killed a midwife and her colleague on 1 April 2021 in Balkh.

Sources in Balkh told the Silk Way Weekly that this 23-year-old midwife was named Nafisa and her colleague was Mohammad Gholami. Nafisa worked in a clinic in Alichopan area of Mazar-e-Sharif, central Balkh, and Mohammad Gholami was also in charge of the same clinic's pharmacy. On their way home, they were arrested by the Taliban at a checkpoint in Mazar-e-Sharif city, and after being tortured, they were killed by stabbing and shooting

5. Local sources in Balkh told the Silk Way on the on 29 November 2022 that armed people shot and killed 21-year-old Habiba Rahimi in the Nowabad area of the 9th district of Mazar-e-Sharif. Abu Ali Sina e Balkhi Hospital in Mazar-e-Sharif also confirmed to the media that the body of this girl, who was shot in the head, was transferred to this hospital.

The findings of the Silk Way Weekly show

that Habiba Rahimi was killed by the Taliban. She was the only girl in the house and had a mother who was not in good health after she was killed. Habiba's relatives say that before the fall of Afghanistan, she worked in Rahnavard Hospital in Mazar-i-Sharif; But when the Taliban take control of Mazar-e-Sharif, Habiba is fired by the members of this group. Before that, Rahnavard hospital and its employees were threatened by the Taliban.

When Habiba stops working at the hospital, she starts working in a hair salon in Mazar-e-Sharif to support her family. On the morning of the 28 November 2022, she was shot by armed men while she was on her way to the beauty salon with her two friends, in Yekatoot Zerat area of Mazar Sharif city. Her relatives say that among the three girls, the motorcycle riding men targeted and killed only Habiba.

6. Residents of Karte Ali Baba Shir, a Hazara residential area, told the Silk Way Weekly that The body of a naked woman with a severed upper leg was found in this area. The local source in this area on 4 July 2023, at 04:00 P.M. said the body of this woman was found on 3 July in this area of the city.

Ali and Aaliyah - pseudonyms - said that the body of this woman was thrown inside a jar and her identity could not be identified because her head and legs were cut off. They added that the local residents informed the local Taliban officials in Mazar-e-Sharif about this murder and they went to the area to investigate this murder on 4 July. The findings of the Silk Road also show that this woman belonged to the Hazara ethnic group.

7. A reliable local source in Balkh told the Silk Way Weekly on 4 July 2023 that 3 members of the Taliban fighters had beaten severely a woman in the center of Mazar e Sharif. Sources have added that this doctor's name is Laili Naqeeb and she was kidnapped by Taliban forces from her private clinic in the area of Gozargah e Siahgerd - Qubelah Parwin Alley - in Mazar-e-Sharif and was missing for a week.

Sources say that the Taliban forced Laili Naqeeb to share the money for performing abortions with this group; But Mrs. Naqeeb said that she does not perform such an operation in her clinic. The Taliban take Laili with them and keep her in the detention center of this group for a week.

The sources add that the Taliban severely beat this doctor and handed her over to her family after a week. The picture of Laili Naqeeb provided to the Silk Way Weekly shows that her health condition is not good.

Sources say that Mrs. Naqeeb was hospitalized for two days and then she was transferred to her home. The officials of Balkh Public Health Department have not said anything about this until now. It is said that Mrs. Naqeeb was Uzbek.



On April 1, 2021, A midwife named Nafisa was killed with a knife and bullet in Alichopan area. Photo: Social Networks.

Slaughterhouse for women

A report of suppression of protesting girls in Balkh by the Taliban

You still don't know us properly; Whoever makes the slightest move against us to defame us, we will cut off his head.

The words of a member of the Taliban

By: Sara Balkhi

Translated by: Mohammad Rezaie

Date: From August 2021 to October 2022

The restrictions that entered Afghanistan at the same time as the Taliban and extended Pakistan's hand more than before in the administrative-security structures of the country, opened a new window to the murders and secret and open terrors managed against Afghan citizens.

Violation of citizens' human rights, repression, discrimination and deadly restrictions on the daily life situation have caused a number of Balkh residents, especially women, to launch protest marches against this situation and demand the restoration of their civil dignity and fundamental rights. However, in order to curb these protests, the Taliban have tried to use their traditional methods such as repression accompanied by violence, torture, imprisonment and killing.

In the present report, we are dealing with two large protest marches of women and girls in Balkh, both of which were violently suppressed and many protesters were arrested, imprisoned, tortured and killed.

1. On 4 September 2021, notices were published by civil activists of Mazar-e-Sharif in the media and social networks and WhatsApp groups about the launch of a women's protest in Balkh against the Taliban government and the government of Pakistan, due to the employment of Pakistani diplomats in Afghan offices.

Ziwa Wafaei, a women's rights activist in Balkh, told the Silk Way Weekly that she wanted to participate in a protest march; But her family opposed her and did not allow her to join the protestors. Ms. Wafaei says that she found out through her friends that nearly 70 boys and girls participated in this protest against the Taliban and the government of Pakistan. She adds: "The participants in this peaceful march did not demand anything but their rights; But this protest movement was turned violent by the Taliban and 40 girls and boys participating in this march were arrested by the Taliban forces".

After arresting the protestors in Mazar-e-Sharif city, the Taliban threatened the journalists who came to the place of the protestors to cover the news of the march, that if this news is published anywhere, they will kill all of them who publish the news. Therefore, reporters could not mediate this news; But after three-four months, some of the details of this news were published by the girls who were arrested in some media.

Women times media, publishing a report on October 9, 2022, quoting an eyewitness in Balkh, wrote that following two protests on the 6 September and October 2021, the bodies of 115 women were transferred to one of the hospitals in the city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

A reliable source told the Silk Way Weekly that she spoke with one of her friends named Sakinah, who participated in the protest on 6 September 2021, in



Balkh girls took to the streets two days after the deadly terrorist attack on TaaJ Educational Center in west of Kabul. March date: 03/11/2022. Photo: Sent to the Silk Way Weekly.

the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, after being released from the Taliban prison. She, who saw Sakinah closely, said: My colleague Sakinah, who worked in one of the private clinics during the Republic government and lost the job after the Taliban returned to power, was also arrested by the Taliban forces for participating in this protest march and was detained for two months under torture in prison.

This source adds; On the day Sakinah was released from the Taliban prison on bail, she went to see her and saw that she was not in a good mood. Sakinah shares with her friend the oppression she and the other girls experienced in prison: "We were 20 girls in prison in a dark room that smelled of blood. We did not know about the rest of the girls in which room they were imprisoned. A woman was brutally torturing us with whips and electric shocks. "We were sexually assaulted many times by the Taliban."

According to the source, the blackness and bruises on Sakinah's body showed that she was brutally tortured in prison. Sakinah continued: "In this prison, women were brutally tortured day and night, and the screams of women could be heard from the room next to us. Three of our colleagues died in front of my eyes due to severe torture. This source adds that Sakinah's story from the Taliban prison was very sad.



Female students who wanted to join the protestors were imprisoned by the Taliban inside Balkh University. March date: 03/11/2022. Photo: Sent to the Silk Way Weekly.

When this source suggests to Sakinah to let what happened to her and her associates to be published on the media, Sakinah's brother opposes this and tells her: "This case concerns us. Can the media erase this stain of infamy on our family?"

The source continues: "In response to him [Sakinah's brother], I said that if the oppression that happened to Sakeena is not made public, it will be a great punishment for her." After hearing this [speech], Sakinah's brother insulted me and kicked me out of his house."

The source says that a week later, she heard the news of Sakinah's death: "Shee was shot dead by his brother. The reason for that was to erase the infamous stain that sat on the lap of Sakinah's family after she was caught and tortured. According to the source, Sakinah's brother, besides not being punished in connection with his sister's murder, also joined the ranks of the Taliban and now works as the Taliban's administrative deputy in Balkh.

Narges was another protester who spent three days in Taliban prison. A reliable source told the Silk Way Weekly: "After her release, the Taliban asked her to marry one of the members of this group; But Narges did not accept this offer. The source adds that after two days, the Taliban went behind the door of 22-year-old Nargis' house and forced her to marry one of their peo-



The Badri (suicide) Taliban forces surrounding the girl protestors in Mazar-e-Sharif. March date: 03/11/2022. Photo: Sent to the Silk Way Weekly.

ple. "Narges was almost 22 years old and was a first-year student of the Faculty of Economics in one of the private universities. Narges' mother said that after months passed, she could not see her daughter and she does not know if she is alive or not".

The findings of the Silk Way Weekly show that Sakineh and Narges belonged to the Balkh Hazara ethnic group.

2. Local sources in Balkh reported on 3 October 2022 said that the Taliban arrested a number of female protesters who had marched in the city of Mazar e Sharif in response to the attack on the Kaj school in the west of Kabul - 30 Sep 2022 - and transferred them to an unknown place. have given. According to this report, the Taliban broke the cell phones of the girl protesters and beat some of them severely.

Few hours before the arrest of the protesters in Mazar-e-Sharif by the Taliban, the girls from the Balkh University dormitory also told the media that the Taliban had completely closed the gate of the dormitory on them, so that they could not join the protesters.

Local sources added that the Red Taliban faction in Balkh transferred dozens of female protesters who were students to an unknown location after forcing them into a military ambulance. At the same time as this incident, one of the local sources told the Silk Way Weekly that the Taliban told the detained girl protesters that they will not be released without the guarantee of their families. According to this report, although the Taliban prevented female students from leaving by locking the dormitory door and the exit doors of Balkh University; But the female students outside the dormitory had poured into the streets alone and chanted the slogan "Stop the Genocide of Hazaras". The female students of Balkh University had called to launch their protest march.

ZiWa Wafaei, one of the participants of the 3 October 2021 protest march in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, told the Silk Way Weekly: "On the morning of Monday, October 3, 2021, the city of Mazar-e-Sharif took on a military appearance, as if a coup had taken place. The Taliban had stationed a military vehicle in every street and their soldiers could be seen everywhere. Mrs. Wafaei adds that after the deadly suicide attack on the Kaaj Educational Center in the west of Kabul, in which 58 students were killed and nearly 126 others were injured, they held a protest rally: "A group of women and I had spread the notices of the protest gathering online a few days ago. Our protest was against the targeted killing of the Hazara people, the widespread lack of women's rights, their removal from important social structures, and the banning of girls from education".

According to Ms. Wafaei, after learning that girls are holding a protest march, the Taliban decide that they should suppress these protests: "We were supposed to start a protest rally from Balkh University; But the Taliban were aware of our plan; They surrounded the university and locked the female students in the dormitory. Inevitably, we determined another place to hold the protest rally. According to Wafai, each of the girls put their slogans in their sleeves and passed the Taliban checkpoints.

The protest of girls in Balkh makes the Taliban angry and the fighters of this group

Slaughterhouse for women

A report of suppression of protesting girls in Balkh by the Taliban

decided to suppress the protest gathering. Mrs. Wafaei says: "It was around 09:00 in the morning when we started the protest; We were nearly 50 women and mostly young girls. Beside us, six young boys from the students of Balkh University were also present. According to her, in a year of Taliban rule, this was the first time that men stood next to female protesters and chanted the slogan of stopping the genocide of the Hazaras with them around the city.

"The roads were full of men and many of them chased us away with insults and humiliation. The Taliban were shocked to see us, as if we attacked them with guns and cannons. While we only had papers in our hands on which our slogans were written. Dozens of Taliban armed forces surrounded us in the center of the city.

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The Taliban mentally tortured the girls for nearly three hours in the security headquarters, checked their cell phones and then released them all. Wafaei says: "During this process, all the photos and videos from the demonstration were forcibly removed from the girls' mobile phones. Everyone's contact information was copied from their mobile phones. "I had deleted my mobile phone memory and my contacts with sensitive people before going to the demonstration." The Taliban forces arrested Mortaza Karimi, a student of journalism faculty and one of the participants of the protest march, and shot his uncle.

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Threatening and beating protesters

According to Ms. Wafaei, the Taliban first want to arrest the boy protesters in order to suppress the 3rd August 2022 protest march in Mazar-i-Sharif. But they manage to escape before being caught. After that, the Taliban go to the girls and threaten, beat and arrest them. Ms. Wafaei continues: "A member of the Taliban approached us and asked: What is your problem that you are screaming on the road?"



In this picture, the Badri Taliban forces have captured the female protesters in front of the Balkh Police Command. March date: 03/11/2022. Photo: Sent to the Silk Way Weekly.

Then he said: You are a woman and you should be at home; What are you doing here on the road? Wafai, as a representative of the protest gathering, tells this Taliban member: "Give us the opportunity to read our resolution to you, and you, who claim to be in power, are obliged to hear our protest." Talib aims his weapon at Mrs. Wafai; But "I read the resolution in which I condemned the exclusion of women and girls from education and work and the genocide of the Hazaras." Ms. Wafaei had read the resolution halfway through a member of the Taliban got angry and threatened her: "If you keep going, I'll shoot." Ms. Wafaei continued her words: "A few more words after I continued, the Taliban commander hit me with the butt of his gun. At the request of my colleagues, I stopped reading the resolution. I told the girls to all go to our houses"; But the Taliban forces did not allow the girls to go to their homes. The commander of the Taliban told the girls: "Don't move"!

When the Taliban did not let the female protesters go to their homes, Mrs. Wafai says to the Taliban commander: "What crime are you detaining us and keeping us here for?" Our protest was peaceful and ended; Now we have to go home." She, however, receives a shocking response from the Taliban: "You still don't know us prop-

erly; "Whoever makes the slightest move against us and to defame us, we will cut off his head." The Taliban militia further said: "Wait right here on the side of the road"!

After a few moments of the girl protesters being surrounded in Mazar-e-Sharif, the Badri military unit - a special unit of the Taliban, some of whose members are suicide bombers - comes to the place of the girls' protest gathering. Mrs. Wafai stands in front of the suicide bombers of the Taliban and says to them: "Did we come to you with cannons and guns when you didn't see these existing forces as enough and asked for your Badri unit?" We don't have anything else except a slogan sheet. According to Ms. Wafaei, the Taliban told her that people like her should be killed: "We are the enemy of prostitutes like you, and you should be killed." Because all the corruption is under your feet and those like you, and you started these protests yourself."

Arresting and the torturing protesters

Mrs. Wafai says; While the girl protesters who were surrounded by the Taliban wanted to return to their homes peacefully, the Taliban commander ordered his forces to force the girl protesters into the building of his command and torture them: "The girls said: No! We are going to our homes." At this moment, the forces of the Badri Tal-



Taliban use children as military militias. March date: 03/11/2022. Photo: Sent to the Silk Way Weekly.

iban unit approach the gathering of girls and take the girls inside the command area by beating them with whips and gun butts.

Ziwa says: "When we entered there, I had no hope left and I said that this is the place where Forozan Safi and dozens of other protesting girls were brought last year, some of them were killed by the Taliban and others have disappeared until now. At first, some Taliban forces came and collected our cell phones; Later, they wrote our names, home address and other details on a piece of paper."

The girls who were detained in the Taliban security headquarters in Mazar-e-Sharif insisted on going home; But the Taliban kept saying to them: "You are politicians and your men are without zeal that women like you have survived."

Ms. wafaei says that she felt pain and dizziness from the blow that one of the Taliban hit her on the head while reading the resolution, and she begged the Taliban: "Let us go, we can't stand anymore." Meanwhile, a member of the Taliban, with an angry look, says to Mrs. Wafai: "Don't talk, prostitute, we have a lot to do with you."

The Taliban mentally tortured the girls for nearly three hours in the security headquarters, checked their cell phones and then released them all. Wafaei says: "During this process, all the photos and videos from the demonstration were forcibly removed from the girls' mobile phones. Everyone's contact information was copied from their mobile phones. "I had deleted my mobile phone memory and my contacts with sensitive people before going to the demonstration."

The Taliban forces arrested Mortaza Karimi, a student of journalism faculty and one of the participants of the protest march, and shot his uncle.

Mrs. Wafaei says: "I went to my bedroom and entered the virtual space again. One of the girls wrote in the WhatsApp group that Mortaza Karimi has been disappeared. Hossain Karimi, Mortaza's uncle, who was a worker and after the arrest of his brother's son, went to the Taliban office to look for Mortaza, was brutally killed by the forces of this group".

According to Mrs. Wafaei, the Taliban try to find the organizers one day after the march. Through the documents they collected from the girls' mobile phones, they obtained more information about the identity and residence of the participants of the march and pursued and arrested them. In an interview with the Silk Way Weekly, Wafai said: "I and a number of my companions are now displaced and are under persecution; "Our crime is peaceful advocacy for our most basic human rights."

The findings of the Silk Way Weekly show that the Taliban's treatment of women in Balkh has become much worse now and in the past two years, many women in this province and neighboring provinces have been mysteriously killed by the Taliban forces and their affiliates, and some have been forced to marry Taliban commanders, and some have been sexually assaulted. The vast majority of female victims in Mazar-e-Sharif were from the Hazara ethnic group, and the description of some of those events is detailed in the main report on the systematic killing of Hazaras in Balkh.

The body of a woman was found in a house in Balkh

Silk Way Weekly: The Taliban security command in Balkh says that the body of a woman was found in a house in the 10th security area of Mazar-e-Sharif, the capital of this province.

Mohammad Asif Waziri, the spokesman of the Taliban security command in Balkh, says that this 55-year-old woman was first kidnapped and then killed.

According to Waziri, the dead woman's name is Tahira and her body was found

last night - Monday, 17 July - while she was buried.

Waziri says that a husband and wife have been arrested in connection with the kidnapping and murder of Tahira. This couple is accused of abducting Tahira on Sunday afternoon, 16 July, and then killing her and burying her body in their house.

Waziri adds that the motive for the kidnapping and murder of this woman is still unclear and the investigation is ongoing.

A woman was killed in Balkh

Silk Way Weekly: Local media reported that a woman has been killed by an armed thief in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, the center of Balkh.

The media, quoting their sources, have written that this event took place on Saturday, July 15, in the 9th security area of Mazar-e-Sharif city.

According to reports, this woman's name was Wahida, and she was killed by an armed thief in her home with a brick and a knife.

According to media reports, the person accused of murder entered the house for

the purpose of stealing and after having a physical fight with Wahida, he first injured her with a brick and then stabbed her to death.

Wahida's relatives have told the media that the person accused of murder was a worker at Wahida's house a few days ago and entered her house under the pretext of taking his labor tools.

The security officials in Mazar-e-Sharif confirmed this incident and said that the person accused of murder was arrested by the local residents and then handed over to the 9th security district.

Taliban shot, killed a young Hazara man in Balkh

Silk Way Weekly: Local sources in Balkh told the Silk Way that Taliban forces have shot a Hazara youth in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, the capital of this province.

Sources add that this 25-year-old man's name is Chiragh Ali and he was arrested by Taliban forces on Monday of last week - 24 July, 2023 - and then he was brutally shot. The findings of the Silk Way show that Chiragh Ali, the son of Hussain Ali, was the main resident of Khedir Daikundi district and has been living with his family in Aliabad town of Mazar-e-Sharif for some time.

Eyewitnesses of this incident told Silk Way that the Taliban forces first surrounded Chiragh Ali's house and after arresting him, they shot, killed him near the Muhammad Rasulullah Mosque in Aliabad

town of Mazar-e-Sharif.

One of Chiragh Ali's relatives told the Silk Way that he was arrested and imprisoned by Taliban forces a year ago for the crime of having a photo with a weapon on his phone.

According to the sources, Chiragh Ali was not a member of any political party or security organization in the previous government and was an ordinary citizen.

Chiragh Ali's relatives added that he was released from Taliban prison with the help of local elders, and during this time, he worked as an ordinary labor man.

In the past two years, the Taliban have arrested, imprisoned and shot dozens of Hazara citizens just for being Hazara.

Balkhab Resistance and the Taliban War Crime; A Report on the Killing of Civilians

By: Khaliq Ebrahimi
Translated by: Mohammad Rezaie

One year has passed from Balkhab war. Last year, on such days, the fire of war was burning in Hazara district of Balkhab, Sarpol. The warring parties fought a bloody war for three days. Then, Balkhab resistance forces led by Mahadi Mujahid took refuge in the mountains. When 6000 Taliban forces entered Balkhab district, set on fire the lives and harvests of the civilians in Balkhab. Although they declared the war over; But its consequences still weigh heavily on the practical life and spirit of the people of Balkhab.

Local sources in Balkhab say that they have collected information about 85 people (20 militaries and 65 civilians) killed in Balkhab by the Taliban. These sources noted that most of the victims were children, women and elderly people. At that time, UNAMA had announced that 27,000 people were displaced in Balkh and Bamyan mountains. Balkhab internally displaced people lived for three months in the mountains.

The Taliban fighters which suicide bombers were among them, entered Balkhab after three days of war with Mahdi Mujahid on 25 June 2022; After the Taliban fighters captured Balkhab, they cut off Telecommunication networks to limit access of free media and human rights organizations to details of the events in Balkhab. By doing this, the Taliban turned Balkhab into a safe haven for committing the most horrific crimes, from burning markets to field executions. Local sources in Balkhab say that Taliban started house to house search after they entered Balkhab district.

The findings of the Silk Way Weekly show that the Taliban fighters harmed severely the civilians by making extra judicial decisions. In many cases, the Taliban fighters shot killed the civilians in Balkhab. For instance, 13 people had gone to the mosque

of Chenarak village to protect themselves, but the Taliban fighters had taken them out of the mosque and shot killed them, without asking any questions from them, in a desert court style of the Taliban.

Ali - a fake name - whose elderly father was killed by Taliban fighters in Balkhab, told the Silk Way: "Before the Taliban came to Balkhab, we left our homes and went to the mountains. My old father stayed at home." He says that his father was a normal person and a farmer; But the Taliban shot him and four other people from the same village. Ali adds that his father was shot near his house and his family could not return to the village for his burial due to the fear of the Taliban. A few days later, the elders of the village buried Ali's father and four other dead people outside the public cemetery, without mourning.

The Taliban brutal violence in Balkhab, had scared Balkhab residents; as a result, 27,000 people were displaced in the Balkhab and Bamyan mountains. In another cruel act, the Taliban also closed the roads leading to Balkhab. This act precluded the aid agencies to reach out to this district. Local sources told the Silk Way that about 30 children died in Balkhab mountains due to lack of shelter, food, doctor and medicine.

Local sources reported on 24 June 2022 shared the list of 37 victims and confirmed that they had buried them with the permission of Taliban, but without holding funerals and tributes.

Local sources added that the number of victims of the Balkhab war reached more than 56 people, many of whose bodies were left without burial in the villages. Now, after a year, reliable local sources say that the number of victims of the Balkhab war is 85 people. 20 militaries and 65 civilians; But their identity and specifications have not been provided to the Silk Way Weekly.

The initial list of the civilian victims killed when Taliban fighters entered Balkhab district:

No	Name	Father's Name	Age	Occupation	Type of incident	Place of Incident
1	Sayed Hussain	Sayed Abbass	58	Shepherd	Shot killed	Qala Gak
2	Sayed Azim	Sayed Noor	82	worker	Shot killed	Takhshar
3	Sayed Ali Aqa	Sayed Hussain	22	worker	Shot killed	Takhshar
4	Sayed Ali	Sayed Reza	21	worker	Shot killed	Takhshar
5	Mohammad Amin		51	worker	Shot killed	Takhshar
6	Mohammad Ali		35	worker	Shot killed	Takhshar
7	Khalifa Muqadam	Abdul Rahim	63	Smith man	Shot killed	Chala
8	Jabar	Muqadam	32	Smith man	Shot killed	Chala
9	Muslim	Ali Mohammad	17	farmer	Shot killed	Eltarkak
10	Hussain	Ali Mohammad	28	farmer	Shot killed	Etrkak
11	Nader	Rahim	17	Shepherd	Shot killed	Chenarak
12	Ebrahim	Abdul Hussain	34	farmer	Shot killed	Chenarak
13	Yaqub	Ismael	22	Shepherd	Shot killed	Chenarak
14	Mir	Diwana	35	Worker	Shot killed	Bazarkohna
15	Ahmad	Khadim	31	Farmer	Shot killed	Shirqala
16	Sayed Hamid Balkhi	Ismael	27	student	Shot killed	Prpshan
17	Amanullah		21	farmer	Shot killed	Hoosh



Balkhab Resistance and the Taliban War Crime; A Report on the Killing of Civilians

18	Ghulam Nabi		45	Unemployed	Shot killed	Hoosh
19	Bibi Naz	Haji Hussain's wife	75	Unemployed	Shot killed	Kashkak
20	Ghuam Sakhi	Ghulam Nabi	72	farmer	Shot killed	Glorz
21	Jawad	Juma Ali	65	farmer	Shot killed	Glorz
22	Majid	Mohammad Ali	28	farmer	Shot killed	Glorz
23	Ghulam Ali		23	farmer	Shot killed	Glorz
24	Nasrullah	Awaz	Young man	farmer	Shot killed	Tarkhoj
25	Mohammad Reza		Young man	farmer	Shot killed	Tarkhoj
26	Sayed Mir Hus-sain	Sayed Moham-mad Reza	21	farmer	Shot killed	Dahana
27	Somand	Ghulam Ali's wife	80		Shot killed	Hoosh
28	Haji Haidari's father		90		Shot killed	Hoosh
29	Nader	Mohammadi	25	Worker	Shot killed	Giro
30	Five people were shot killed in Khowal Siakak village which their identities are not identified yet and have been buried in a mass grave in Khowal Siakak village.					
31	Local sources say 13 people were shot killed in the mosque of Chenrarak village.					
32	Local sources say 6 people were killed in Shirqala village and 3 in Eilaq village.					
33	An infant was shot killed in Hoosh village along with Haji Haidar's father, whose identity is unknown.					
34	In the days after the Balkhab war, local sources shared this list with the Silk Way Weekly. Local sources added that more than 50 people were killed in this war but they have only managed to get the permission to bury 36 victims from the Taliban. Local sources confirmed that there are some bodies in Balkhab districts that Taliban do not allow the people to bury them.					

Reactions to the illegal and violent behavior of Taliban fighters against civilians in Balkhab showed the deep concern of international human rights defenders about the humanitarian situation in this district. Amnesty International published a statement on Twitter on June 26 2021 - a day after the Taliban entered Balkhab - saying that it was concerned about executions in

the field and the harming of civilians in Balkhab. In the declaration of this institution, closing the transportation routes and preventing humanitarian aid from aid groups from arriving, was described as a violation of the rules of war and a "war crime".

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission which operates in

exile, issuing a statement on 28 June 2021, confirmed the occurrence of crimes against human rights by Taliban fighters in Balkhab. The statement added that Taliban had committed war crimes by closing the transportation routes, cutting telecommunication networks and shooting tens of the civilians in Balkhab. According to the announcement, the Taliban killed civilians and set their houses on fire, and shot the people who surrendered to this group.

Richard Bennet the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on Afghanistan condemning the extrajudicial acts of the Taliban fighters in Balkhab said "there are concerning reports of extra judicial killings, internally displaced people, Destruction of property and other human rights violations from Balkhab district." One day after this incident, 29 July 2021, Patricia Gossman, the associate director for the Asia division of the Human Rights Watch, said that the Taliban forces have executed several prisoners in the field in retaliation for the armed resistance. Gassman urged Taliban to stop group punishment and other war crimes and their forces shall be accountable for Committing multiple crimes in Balkhab.

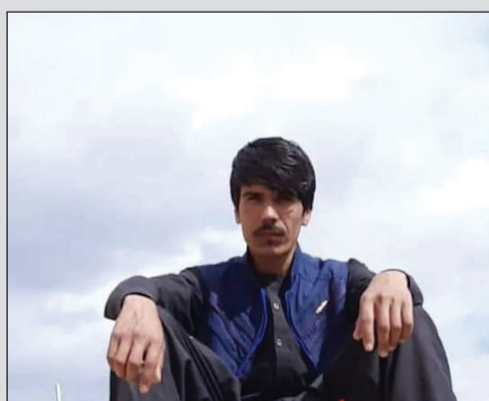
Almost two months after the Balkhab war, the displaced were still in the mountains when the Taliban announced the killing of Mahdi Mujahid. Enayatullah Khaearazmi, the spokesperson of the Defense ministry, said the border forces of Taliban had killed commander Mahdi while he was trying to cross the border to go to Iran. Mehdi Mujahid was the only Hazara commander of the Taliban who, against what he called the neglect of the Hazaras in the Taliban government, clashed with the Taliban and finally stood against them with armed resistance. He was defeated and af-

ter nearly two months, at the border zero point of Iran and Afghanistan was killed by the Taliban in a field court.

After commander Mahdi was killed, while there was no resistance against the Taliban in Balkhab, but the Taliban fighters continued Extralegal crimes there. Local sources told the Silk Way Weekly that the Taliban fighters detain youth and elderly people in Balkhab and torture them to death. In the last case, Taliban detained Mohammad Hussain Ehsani, a tribal chief, on 3 May 2023, in Mazar-e- Sharif, the capital city of Balkh province and killed him under torture.

In another incident, on 18 February 2022, the Taliban intelligence detained five relative of Tahir Zuhair from "Kota" village of Dare Suf district, Samangan. Tahir Zuhair was a former official of Ashraf Ghani who had served in different positions including Bamyan Governor and Minister of Culture and Information. He joined Mahdi Mujahid in Balkhab resistance and fought against the Taliban beside Mahdi. Finding of the Silk Way Show that the Taliban intelligence tortured harshly Zuhair's relatives to show them the hideout of Zuhair.

Tahir Zuhair, the advisor and supporter of Mahdi Mujahid, surrendered to the Taliban on May 14 2023. It was expostulated that Zuhair was in charge of Balkhab resistance front after the death of Mahdi Mujahid; but based on the available data there has been no resistance against the Taliban in Balkhab after Mhadi Mujahid was killed. Nevertheless, the Taliban are still trying to take revenge on the people of Balkhab. In the last case, on 16 June 2023, the Taliban set on fire market of Shahrak Dahana, Balkhab. It said that this market was built by Mahdi Mujahid.



Taliban killed anyone encountering when entering Balkhab

The Silk Way Weekly Interview with a relative of a victim of war in Balkhab

The Silk Way Weekly had an interview with Ali -not real name- son of one of the victims, on the first anniversary of Balkhab tragic war, killing 65, wounding 20 civilians, and how his father was assassinated.

How did Taliban shoot and kill your father? My father was injured; While he was escaping, he was injured near our house and the bullet hit one of his legs. When he was not able to go to a safe place, Taliban had killed him.

Where was your father shot killed and how were you informed, he was killed? He was at home. When Taliban entered Balkhab, he wanted to escape from the village to the mountains. While fleeing the village he was injured near the village and then was shot and killed. We were informed at 9:00 A.M our father was killed by Taliban. We were not in the village and at home. We all had left the village and had gone to the mountains, and only my father had remained at home. We were informed by the villagers that our father was martyred.

Was your father a member of the former political parties or a member of

Mawlawi Mahdi's group? No! My father was a farmer? We are originally a farmer family and my father was not a member of the political parties or Mawlawi Mahdi's group. My father had remained at home to take care of our farm and could not save his life and he was finally martyred.

How could you receive your father's body? Didn't Taliban make any barrier? When we heard our father was shot and killed, we could not return to the village. If we went to our village Taliban would have killed us. We could not go to the village due to fear from the Taliban. Taliban brought the body of my father and gave it to the elders of the village. Then my father along with other four people were buried by the village elders. Because the village elders could not bring the bodies to the village and had buried them near the village.

How old was your father? He was 65.

After your father was shot and killed, did you remain in the village or went to the mountains? Before Taliban came to the village, my father remained at home because he was an old man, but other members of our family had gone to the

mountains.

Did Taliban paid any compensation or sympathized with your family or made barriers to you? Taliban killed many people when they entered Balkhab. People had gone to the mountains fearing Taliban may take revenge. We even could not bury the body of our father. Taliban searched Mawlawi Mahdi group's members and killed anyone they found because they thought all Balkhab people supported Mawlawi Mahdi. Taliban paid no compensation to us but they created security barriers to us. They thought all people who were killed were members of Mawlawi Mahdi groups' members. As a result, they searched for us. We could not return home to the village because our life was in danger.

Do you feel in secure or threatened by Taliban? We feel secure now. But were under prosecution on the early days when Taliban seized Balkhab.

When Taliban captured Balkhab after defeating Mawlawi Mahdi, what measures did take there? We feared to risk our lives before Taliban came to Balkhab and before the war started be-

tween Malawi Mahdi and Taliban, we left our village and went to the mountains. When Taliban seized Balkhab they nearly killed anyone who was in the village; They shot and killed civilians and they even set on fire the houses and killed many farmers. People went to the mountains because they were afraid of Taliban. Most of the people who had remained in the village were killed by Taliban.

How many people lived or live in the area you live in Balkhab? And how many people were killed? Five people were killed in our village. All of the victims were civilians and farmers. When the elders of the village received their bodies, they were buried near the village. Relatives of most of the villagers were not in the village to bury them. Also, we were not in the village.

How is the situation in Balkhab now? Are people detained and killed now? In the early days, when Taliban entered Balkhab, they harassed the people a lot. They forced the people to give them weapons. As a result, they detained and tortured many people. They forced the people to give them weapons. Now, the situation has improved in comparison to the past year.

The Massacre in Mazar-e-Sharif in 1998; "Hazaras are not Muslims, We Must Kill them"

By: Mohammad Anwar Rahimi
Translated by Mohammad Sakhi Rezaie

On August 8, 1998 Taliban militia captured the city of Mazar-e- Sharif and massacred Hazaras as ordered by the Taliban leaders. After the Taliban could break the defense lines of Hezb e Wahdat and entered Maza-e- Sahrif they started massacring Hazaras supported by the local Pashtuns, especially the force under Juma Khan Hamdard, a militia commander of Hezb e Islami of Hykmatyar. The Taliban forces started house to house search of Hazaras and killed about 8000 to 10000 Hazaras men, women and children. As a result, tens of thousands of Hazaras families were displaced and disappeared and there is no detailed information of them even now. In addition to killing systematically Hazaras which was part of the plan of the Taliban before capturing Mazar-e- Sharif, the Taliban were defeated several times by Hazara and Uzbek fighters and had suffered heavily in their ambushes on Mazar-e- Sharif. As a result, on August 8, 1998, and the coming days tens of thousands of innocent Hazaras were massacred by the Taliban forces.

Ahmad Rashid, a Pakistani journalist, who was in Mazar-e- when Taliban captured this city, writes in his book "Taliban, Women, Mafia business and oil project in the central Asia, "The Taliban decided to target Hazaras; However, they did not want to make the same mistake of the past year, not to be accompanied by the guides. As a result, Taliban recruited the Local Pashtuns who knew the city very well and were loyal

to Hekmatyar in the past. on the following days, the Balkh Pashtun fighters guided Taliban to find Hazaras in house to house search. But Taliban were hard to control and the brutal kkkilling continued. They even killed other ethnic groups... and imprisoned thousands of Hazaras in Mazar-e- Sharif prison. When Mazar prison was full, Taliban imprisoned Hazaras in containers and they suffocated there.

In order to compensate their defeats in the previous attacks on Mazar-e- Sharif fueled by ethno-religious hatred, Taliban committed the worst crimes on Hazaras. Flips Dennis noted in his book "Worsening Hazaras harassment" that "Under the Taliban rule, when their fighters advanced in Central and Northern Afghanistan harass-

ment of Hazaras increased; because Taliban fighters are mainly recruited from Pashtun tribes which are the traditional enemies of Hazaras. In 1998, after the Afghanistan United Front war crime against Taliban, the group killed about 2000 Hazaras for their religious belief in Mazar-e- Sahrif. Civilians were killed in the Markets and residential areas while their throats were cut.

Mullah Mana Niazi, the Taliban Provincial Governor for Balkh, in a sermon said "Hazaras are not Muslims. You can Kill them and killing them is not a sin. The nature of their attack on Hazaras was ethno-religious hatred which was a warning to Hazras to learn a lesson from the history: They had 3 options; change their religion, leave Afghanistan or to be prosecuted. As a

result, hundreds of Hazars fled to save their lives."

Mullah Abdul Manan Niazi, the Taliban Provincial Governor of Balkh, openly said in the mosques and other public spaces that Hazaras were not Muslims and all of them must be killed and displaced. Ahmad Rashid notes in his book "Taliban, Women, Mafia business and oil project in the central Asia" that "Mullah Niazi announced from the mosques that Hazra Shiites in Mazar-e- Sharif had three options: To become Sunni, to go to Iran or be prosecuted and all Shiites Hussainias "religious places" must be closed." He repeatedly said "Hazaras are not Muslims and we must kill them. They either must become Muslims or leave Afghanistan. Anywhere you go we will catch you. If you go up high we will catch your legs and bring you down and if you go down we will catch your hair and bring you up." Mullah Manan Niazi had ordered the Taliban forces to kill all Hazras in Mazar -e- Sharif once they capture the city. As a result, more than 2000 thousand Hazaras were killed in Mazar-e- Sharf due to using Islam as a tool. Mullah Manan Niazi was one of the top Taliban commanders who cooperated with the former Afghan government and he continued killing Hazaras and propagations against Hazaras before he was killed.

In 2000 a documentary film about massacring Hazaras by Taliban in Mazar was released: the film showed Taliban had written on the walls of Mazar-e- Sharif that "Tajiks go to Tajikistan, Uzbeks go to Uzbekistan and Hazaras go to the grave."

...More on next page



The Massacre in Mazar-e-Sharif in 1998; “Hazaras are not Muslims, We Must Kill them”



As it was mentioned earlier, Mullah Niazi and his fighters were systematically killing Hazaras even until the last days of Ashraf Ghani's government and supported by Ghani. For instance, in a video released on social media networks Mullah Niazi says “I announce to Hazaras that you can't have a place among Afghans for your false religion. We will put on fire your homes and we will kill hundreds of you every day and night. Nobody know how we kill them. They can't imagine how we kill them. They think we are like the former jihadists. No! Every night we kill 50 or 60 people of Shiites when they enter anywhere. We kill the mysteriously, in a way they do not know how we do it.” He says in another video tape that “I kill Hazara wealthy men in order to prove it to the history and future generation of Hazaras that we do not allow them to live here.”

Niazi's open statements on massacring Hazaras show this reality that Taliban considered killing Hazaras permutable and based on this they killed Hazaras in different parts of the country. According to the estimations of ICRC Taliban executed about 6,000 civilian Hazaras in Mazar-e-Sharif. However, Ahmad Rashid believes Taliban killed about 8,000 Hazaras in August of 1998 in Mazar-e-Sharif. Patricia Gasman, a professor at Georgetown University, says “The evidence show they [Hazaras] were massacred; because they were Shiite Muslims.”

Hooria Musadeq, Senior researcher and Head of Afghanistan in the Amnesty International, in an interview with “Afghanistan Ro” considers Hazaras massacre as a war crime and said “in 1998, when Taliban captured Mazar-e-Sharif and Balkh province for the second time, Taliban massacred civilians, especially Hazaras including women and children.”

The findings of the Daily Silk Way show that Taliban killed in a heinous way Hazaras after detaining them. Ahmad Rashid quoting Chung Hun the UN the then UN officer in Afghanistan writes “They killed the prisoners in a horrific way. First, the prisoners were taken out of the prison and told them that they had been exchanged. Then they were taken by trucks to the water wells that the shepherds used in Dasht-e-Laili. They had 10 to 15 meters' water. They throw the prisoners alive or after killing them to these wells and then opened fire on them or throw grenade on them and then they poured dirt on them with a bulldozer. The tragedy of the north and then the brutal civil war which broke in the coming summer deepened the racial gap among

the Afghans.”

Ajuddin Sorous reporter of the Afghanistan International quoting a book by Tobe Handrin writes “In 1998 when Taliban seized Mazar-e-Sharif, they killed more than 8,000 civilians.” Ali Maysam Nazari, Head of Foreign Relations for the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan in a tweet said Taliban killed 1,000 civilian Hazaras on this day (18 August 1998) based on ethno-religious factors.

The Human Rights Watch in a report released on November 10, 1998, said Taliban killed as much people as possible in the absence of free media and aid agencies to document the incidents on those days. What happened in the city was terrible. HRW quoting the eye witnesses said “The front line fighters of Taliban opened fire on every living thing in a crazy way, and hundreds of civilians were killed among those who were killed by Taliban.”

HRW quoting those survived the massacre and other informed sources that about 2,000 people or more than 2,000 people were killed by the Taliban on this day. HRW expressed its grave concerns on raping the girls and women by the Taliban. According to the HRW, Mullah Mana Nizai, the Provincial Governor of the Taliban in Balkh, had told Hazara Shiites either they shall become Sunnis or leave Afghanistan, other than this, they would be killed.

According to the HRW, other leaders of Taliban not only were aware of the mass killing of the people, but allowed the Taliban fighters to continue killing the people for several days. The HRW report adds that “In the coming days, started widespread house to house search for Hazaras, Tajiks and Uzbeks men. Taliban detained hundreds of Hazaras men and boys and many of them were killed.” The HRW admitted in the report that thousands of Hazaras were taken to the crowded prisons and then they were transferred in containers and trucks to the cities of Sheberghan, Herat and Kandahar. The HRW quoting the eyewitnesses said many prisoners died before reaching to Sheberghan. Based on the HRW report, 4,500 people were imprisoned by the Taliban.

Description of Hazaras Massacre in August 1998 based on the Eyewitnesses

In a part of the Afghanistan Justice Project report published in 2005, the experience of the eyewitnesses of the mass killings in Mazar-e-Sharif has been documented. Based on this report, quoting the HRW, Taliban in the first hours of seizing Mazar killed a number of the civilians. According to the eyewitnesses they shot the

civilians and those who were suspected to be military men, were shot in the residential areas, on the streets and in the markets. This massacre was called madness massacre by the eyewitnesses. The followings are some examples of the experience of eyewitnesses:

1: One woman going home from the market said she had seen the body of a child who has been selling bread, a woman who has been going to a ceremony, and a man who wanted to grind flour. According to this report many businessmen were killed in the attack because when Taliban entered Mazar city, they used machine guns mounted on jeeps to shoot at any mover.

2. Another person who had witnessed the mass killings from the roof of their home, describes the moment the Taliban forces entered the city as the following: “I was on the roof of our house and could see the smoke coming from the west of the city. I left my shop and went to the customers area and could see how people were fleeing from the west of Mazar. Chaos reigned everywhere. People were escaping and they crushed with the vehicles leaving the area. The Bazar had collapsed. Bullets rained like hail. I went home and I could hear people screaming and could see the Taliban white flag on the cars.”

3. According to this report, a woman described how his 13-year old son was killed. “My son worked in a rug weaving shop and was shot killed at the first day of the collapse of Mazar, near the Blue shrine. Some people came and told me the body of my son was transferred to the hospital. They told me, your son told us before dying they had come from Kabul to Mazar to save their life but now he was dying here. He was worried who would care of the family? I even could not see my son. I did not want to leave the area for his sake but we had to leave the area.”

4. According to this report, Taliban in the coming days searched every house for the men of other ethnic groups while supported and guided by the local Pashtuns. The main goal of Taliban was to find Hazaras, some of them should be killed for their religious beliefs and ethnicity and others because of the revenge of the defeat of the previous years. Because one year ago; in 1997, Taliban were defeated due to the resistance of Hazaras in Mazar-e-Sharif. As a result, Taliban only thought of taking revenge on the Hazaras. According to the reliable reports, during house to house search, thousands of Hazaras including men, women and children were killed in order not to resist again against the Taliban.”

5. Based on this report, one eyewitness told the HRW “In some cases those who were detained were severely tortured and then shot and killed; some of them were beheaded. Some Tajik and Uzbek men were also killed. But most of the victims were Hazaras men, women and children.”

6. A Tajik man arrested by Taliban on August 10, 1998 described what he had seen as the following: “I was living in Karte Bokhdi, on the third day, Taliban surrounded the streets, and started house to house search. They asked where are Hazaras houses? There was only one Hazara house near us. There were four young Hazara men in the house including one man who was their guest and one man who worked there. Tajiks men, Uzbeks men and Hazaras men (adults) were detained in the neighboring area. We were all taken into the trucks; but the hands of four Hazara men were closed tightly and they were taken some were else. There were two other Hazara boys in our truck. When we reached to the market, the truck stopped, the Taliban took down two boys from the car, and they were told to go to the cross road at the back of the bazar. One Taliban fighter pushed them to walk faster and then shot at their head. We heard later that those four Hazara men were taken to the Mahdia worship place and then they had been killed there. All them were workers and they were not soldiers. They were between 19 and 20 years old.”

7. According to this report, one medical faculty student has said Taliban also searched the hospitals to find Hazara men. “I saw two Hazara boys, 13 and 20; The hand of one of the was broken. Taliban came to the hospital to take them out but the head of the hospital intervened. But Taliban returned the other day and took them out of the hospital.”

8. Based on this report, After Taliban seized Mazar-e-Sharif, Mullah Mana Nizai, the Taliban Provincial Governor, he delivered several sermons at the mosques and issued harsh orders against Hazaras to take the revenge of the Taliban defeat in 1997. He repeatedly said, Hazaras shall become Hanafi Sunni and become Muslims, or leave the city or face the consequence of their religion. He threatened anyone supporting Hazaras; For example, in a speech he said “Hazaras are not Muslims. They are unbelievers. They killed our forces here and now we must kill them.” Based on the Human Rights Watch report such sermons have been delivered by most of the Taliban leader on those days in Mazar-e-Sharif and it indicates killing Hazaras and attacking them have been approved by the top Taliban leadership. ...More on next page

The Massacre in Mazar-e-Sharif in 1998; “Hazaras are not Muslims, We Must Kill them”



9. According to the HRW report, Thousands men from different ethnic groups were detained in the crowded prison of Mazar-e- Sharif and then they were taken to Sheberghan, Herat and Kandahar cities. Most of the prisoners died when they were transferred by trucks carrying 100 to 150 people in containers. For example when the prisoners reached to Sheberghan, it is 130 KM far from Mazar-e- Sahrif, most of the had died due to harsh weather.

Based on the above mentioned cases and statements of the eyewitnesses, and findings of the reliable research reports and news agencies, massacring Hazaras in 1998 and the coming days is the prime example of genocide and crime against the humanity; because most of the victims were civilians and they were killed for decent, racial, ethnicity and religious attachments. They were not killed for the crime of belonging to a hostile and armed military group that fought in the trenches against the Taliban. Women and children formed the major part of the victims who were killed in a terrible way in their houses by the Taliban.

Ahmad Rashid, a Pakistani journalist and researcher, has used terms such as “Brutal Genocide” and “Real Genocide” for Hazaras genocide in 1998 after Mazare-sharif was seized by the Taliban in 1998. Ah-

mad Rashid describes the Taliban’s atrocities on Hazaras as the following. At the beginning hours of October 8, 1998, Hazars suddenly found they were surrounded by the Taliban. The defenders of Hazaras fought until the last bullet and only 100 of them survived. About 10:00 A.M, the first group of Taliban on Toyotas entered Mazar-e Sharif while people did not know this and they were doing their regular activities. In the coming hours, what happened was a terrible genocide that Taliban committed to take revenge for their defeat in 1997 in Mazar-e- Sharif. One of the Taliban commanders later stated that Mullah Omar, the leader of the Group, had allowed them to kill the people for 2 hours, but we did it for two days. The Taliban started killing the people like crazy. Riding on their Toyotas on Mazar streets, they were running wild, and shot on the left and right sides and killed any mover. They shot at women, shopkeepers, karts men, children, donkeys and kids. The streets were full of bodies and the blood was everywhere. The dogs got drunken by eating human flesh and it smelled everywhere.”

In addition to calling the crime of the Taliban against Hazaras, Ahmad Rashid called it “A Real Genocide” and writes: “People took refuge to their houses and the Taliban entered their houses by force and if

it was found that the members of the family were Hazaras they would kill all of them immediately.” He added that one eyewitness told me that “I witnessed killing of a young Tajik Man. Talib, the killer, was still standing on the corpse of the young man. The father of the murdered young man asked why did you kill my son? The killer replied why didn’t you say that you were a Tajik? And the man, while cried sadly, said did you ask me?” In his book, referring to the crimes of the Taliban, Ahmad Rashid points to another part of the eyewitnesses’ statement. “Thousands of Hazaras prisoners were taken to Mazar-e-Sharif prison. When the prisons were full, Taliban placed Hazara prisoners in containers and locked them and the prisoners suffocated in the containers. They took some of these prisoners to Dasht e Laili and killed them there. Taliban had decided to cleans Hazaras from the North.” Since the Taliban group, this time through the collusion of all the pshtun elites, including Ghani, Karzai, Khalilzad, Mulha Habbatullah, Mullah Hassan, Pashtun ministers and generals, have dominated Afghanistan, one of their goals is to implement the Hazara massacre plan, which has never been stopped in the last 150 years by no government. In the 90s

According to the anti-Hazara nature of the Taliban, in the second round of the

Taliban regime, Hazaras are more exposed to the threat and danger of the Taliban forces and other terrorist groups than other ethnic groups. As William Meli, in an interview with Afghanistan International TV has warned: “In the 90s, we know from the August massacre that Mulla Niazi was officially campaigning against Hazaras and ordering them to become Sunnis. These vulnerabilities exist yet. Vulnerabilities that are simply related to the fact that many Hazaras are distinguished from other ethnic groups because of their physical appearance. Therefore, if a situation arises where the holder of power wants to shoe the symbols of his power, one way he can do this is to identify a certain ethnic group and show that he can hit it. Hazaras fit the bill; because this group both can be identified and be humiliated due to their religious beliefs by the Taliban. Now the situation is very vulnerable. If you look at some of the academic works that have been done on the risk of mass murder crimes, the situation in Afghanistan has all of the early warning signs to predict the risk of massacre crimes. This is very worrying.”

We conclude that Hazaras are facing the potential danger of mass murder, which in cases such as the Daikondi massacre, is carried out under the name of relation with the NRF or under other labels.

I was getting ready for the entrance exam; but my dreams remained just dreams

By: Zainab Wafaie
Translated by: Mohammad Sakhi Rezaie

These days, when you walk around the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, you will come across a sign of women’s tailors in the city, where it is written: “We accept apprentices for tailoring training”; Every sewing workshop has attracted many girls for training. Apparently, each of these girls is 18 or 19 years old and some of them are younger than that. Before the Taliban ruled their destiny, everyone was moving in the same direction but with separate goals for their future; But now these girls are working in one direction and only for one small goal.

With the establishment of the Taliban government, schools across Afghanistan were closed to female students above the sixth grade; But Balkh was one of the few provinces where, in the first year of Taliban rule, girls above the sixth grade were allowed to go to school. This situation did

not last long and female students above the sixth grade were also banned from going to school in Balkh too.



Boring days pass one after the other and the face she sees in the mirror every morning looks more withered and depressed than the day before. She does not remember that she ever liked being alone; But lately, perhaps for the first time, she feels at peace in solitude. Asiyah – a nickname – like tens of thousands of girls left out of education, is dealing with the difficulties of life these days. She says that he sees the destruction of her life before his eyes; But she can’t do anything to save

her from this quagmire.

After she stops going to school, Asiyah falls into severe depression. “Before, that, I was not like this a year ago, maybe I was enough in a room to make others laugh; But from the day when the gate of my school was closed, I also lost all my joy and happiness.” These days, Asiyah doesn’t like to sit with others, laugh and get out of her loneliness for a moment. “I don’t like to be in public and talk to anyone, and this feeling creeps into me more and more every day.” The loneliness that Asiyah has sunk into has created a void in her that she cannot understand and explain. Asiyah, when she turns the pages of her dreams, the words choke her and won’t let her say anything.

Asiyah, who is an 11th grade student, wanted to study law after finishing her studies. But now, like a husk separated from a seed, she is separated from her dreams and is thousands of miles away from it.... **...More on next page**

Closed doors of hope:

A tale of Balkh women's lives under the Taliban regime



By Zainab Wafaie

Translated by Hoshang Gulistani

Afghan women have endured hardships, difficulties, and pains for a long time. There have been many women compelled to leave their homes to sell old clothes on the streets in the scorching sun of Mazar-e-Sharif, the center of Balkh, so they can provide a few loaves of bread at night with the profits they make. Shakila, a nickname for one of these women, carries the brunt of life's challenges on her alone; the mother of four, who is about 35 years old, lived a more luxurious life when working in one of the government offices during the republic period. However, the Taliban fired her from her position, and despite her experience and expertise, she has been selling used clothing in the auction market for the past two months.

Shakila lost her husband in the conflict with the Taliban in the Helmand district of Greshk, who had served in the army under the previous government. Shakila was able to provide for her and her children's living costs even after her husband's death since she was a permanent employee and had a fixed salary; nevertheless, remaining at home places her in extraordinary hardship. "At least I didn't have to worry about food, although my husband's absence and the anguish over losing him were unbearable for me." She said. Shakila collects these old garments from her neighbors and sells them for no more than 20 Afghanis a piece at the Mazar-e-Sharif auction market. "I had no money to invest in the business of selling used clothes," she says. To get a few

Afghanis to purchase dry bread, I must sell the clothes of my neighbors. Shakila can buy her children a couple of loaves of dry bread and occasionally other things at night with the money she makes from her daily work. Shakila is only one of thousands of women whose lives have been drastically altered by the Taliban's presence and who will have to endure these sufferings indefinitely.

The 60-year-old lady known only by her nickname Fatemeh, is seated at the other corner of the street, where she has taken sanctuary in the city's market to support her nine-person family. Before the fall of the republic, she lived in Bala Hisar, Kabul, but she fled to Mazar-e-Sharif with her ailing sons and grandsons to seek safety from the hardship of life. Now, she supports them by working in this city. Fatima's husband passed away 20 years ago due to sickness, but at the time, she was merely grieving for her dead husband because she was working as a cook at the Urban Development Directorate and making a comfortable living off of her income. The two sons of Fatemeh are 30 and 35 years old, and both are mentally ill. She says, "Even though both of my sons had mental illnesses and I had lost my husband, I was still able to handle the expenses and illness of my sons." Fatima's sons were receiving therapy, and the doctors had assured her that with thorough and ongoing care they would improve. "I rented a home, and each month I paid 2,000 Afghanis in rent. My monthly salary of \$15,000 would take care of all my issues. Fatemeh now has to care for her seven grandchildren, all of whom are girls, in addition to her two sons. A

mortar round strikes the house of Fatima's daughter in 2021, during a conflict between the Taliban and the security forces of the former government. Her daughter, her husband, and their two children are dead, and Fatemeh finds herself in charge to take care of her grandchildren. She says, "No one offered to look after my grandchildren from the family of my daughter's husband, so I had to bring them with me." With the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, Fatemeh's life also falls. She eventually leaves Kabul after a year of grueling existence there in the hopes that perhaps a glimmer of light would appear there in her life. Fatemeh says, "Life in Kabul became difficult and dark for me, and I thought maybe in Mazar I can find another job." Since six months ago, Fatemeh has made a living by selling used clothing there. She does so from a run-down rental home in Mazar-e-Sharif's fourth district. She buys various sorts of used clothing at a cheaper cost and sells them for a higher price in the market, but occasionally she cannot even make enough money this way to purchase a few pieces of dry bread. "Some days I can sell one or two types of clothes at the market, and at night I can take home bread, but other days I can't even sell 10 Afghanis a day to buy a loaf of bread." Fatemeh has endured challenges over the past two years, in addition to being occasionally interrogated at Taliban checkpoints. The Taliban ask her where she will go without male chaperone. "One day, I was riding in the front seat," she recalls. We were halted by the Taliban, who asked us why I was sitting on that seat and where she was going without without male chaperone. He slipped the driver

twice, and if other passengers had not intervened, the Taliban would have taken us with them. Fatemeh, who is now elderly, has struggled with asthma in addition to mental problems as a result of her traumatic past. Nothing can make her happier than finding a hand to lift the heavy load of life off her shoulders since, for her, Kabul, Mazar, and every other city in the globe are like prisons.

Another adult lady in Mazar-e-Sharif by the name of Tamana- a nickname- must battle life to tame it. Life now looks untamable with the Taliban's return. Tamana has been selling women's clothing for six years and is 55 years old. She was earning a solid living in this manner up until two years ago, but now her business is struggling. In addition, she just received a Taliban order to close her store. Tamana stated as she described her predicament with confusion, "I wonder why the Taliban don't want the women to live in peace. They permit other women to work on the roadways, but because I own a shop, I am not permitted to do so." Tamana's husband passed away from sickness two years ago, leaving her with a son and two daughters. Tamana must set aside a portion of her money to cover the rent on the home she shares with her kids. Despite leading a difficult life, she is soon going to lose her main source of income due to the Taliban's assault. Therefore she must find another option; maybe the street is the only way. Tamana is now unsure about which door to knock on to be heard. She suffered from severe mental illness and ultimately passed out when the Taliban threatened to shut down her shop.

I was getting ready for the entrance exam; but my dreams remained just dreams

To escape from the depression that gripped her, she took refuge in a sewing machine and every morning in the hot and exhausting air of Mazar-e-Sharif, the center of Balkh, she picks up a suitcase full of pieces and spends a long way through the dusty alleys of the city to get to a small sewing machine workshop. "Every day my life became more difficult. I could feel the negative changes in my being. Every day I became more depressed and sad than the previous day. I had become a completely different person. To save myself from excessive de-

pression, I had to take up sewing class. Now that my knowledge and education are short, I will continue sewing so that in the future I can at least cover my daily expenses."

After the Taliban returned to power, female students above the sixth grade in Balkh, unlike in other provinces, could continue their studies at school. Although the Taliban had established strict rules for the presence of female teachers and students in school; But even so, all these Balkh girls were happy that they could go to school.

The Taliban did not hesitate to scare

and discourage girls from going to school in this province. They moved a mine and blew it up in "Shaheed Abdul Khaliq" girls' high school, and then in a declaration, they said that "we are not against girls going to school; But we cannot ensure their security." These tricks did not affect any student and they did not refuse to go to school. After taking the final exam of the 1401 academic year, the Taliban finally closed the gates of schools and colleges in Mazar-i-Sharif as well.

Zahra -pseudonym-, a student who was forced to work in a sewing workshop, says

that she fought for years against the obstacles that were placed in front of her by her extreme family, in order to pave the way to acquire knowledge; But, these days, she has a stronger opponent than her family, who does not let him go to school; The opponent that Zahra is unable to fight is the Taliban group.

Zahra went through tough challenges to prepare herself to enter the university; But as soon as one year is left to achieve her dream, the Taliban become a barrier against it.

The Silk Way Weekly

The Voice
of The War
Victims

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