STATEMENT

October 6, 2026

HRD+ Welcomes ICC Decision to Unseal Four Arrest Warrants for Taliban Leadership for the Crime of Gender Persecution



Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+) welcomes the landmark decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to unseal four arrest warrants against senior Taliban leaders for the crime against humanity of persecution. Making these warrants public signals a concrete step toward dismantling impunity and exposing the de facto leadership responsible for systemic atrocities.

According to the decision issued on Monday, judges unsealed warrants for Taliban Supreme Leader Haibatullah Akhundzada and Chief Justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani—whose existence was first announced in July 2025—as well as two additional suspects, Habibullah Agha and Neda Mohammad Nadim. The Court found reasonable grounds to believe these individuals are criminally responsible for persecution on gender and political grounds under Article 7(1)(h) of the Rome Statute, committed in Afghanistan since August 15, 2021.

This development represents a vital milestone toward securing accountability and restoring human dignity in Afghanistan. Women, girls, and all others victimized by the Taliban's oppressive policies not only deserve justice, but must also be empowered to claim ownership over the ICC process and other universal jurisdiction mechanisms concerning these crimes against humanity.

HRD+ remains steadfast in its dedication to documenting violence, promoting human rights, and resisting the systemic dismantling of women's rights in Afghanistan. We will continue to cooperate with international justice mechanisms to ensure long-term accountability.

We stand with the victims in calling for the expansion of ICC warrants to include all perpetrators of violence in Afghanistan. Furthermore, we stress that the establishment and implementation of the independent Investigative Mechanism for Afghanistan-IIMA remains a

paramount necessity to ensure the comprehensive documentation and preservation of evidence for all crimes committed.

Finally, we urge all ICC State Parties to execute these arrest warrants by all available means, and to leverage domestic legal avenues through the principle of universal jurisdiction. As the ICC decision

emphasizes, the Taliban's persecution extends to political opponents, civil society members, human rights defenders, journalists, and anyone deemed an "ally of girls and women". The international community must act decisively to end this structured gender apartheid and protect all who stand for justice in Afghanistan.

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