

Afghanistan Country Conditions: Situation of Persons with Disabilities

International Refugee Assistance Project

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This report is intended as background reference material for asylum seekers and their counsel only, to assist in their preparation of their cases. It should not be submitted directly to asylum adjudicators in the United Kingdom or United States.

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A. RESEARCH REQUEST

This report provides details on the country conditions of people with physical and/or mental disabilities living in Afghanistan, for use as reference material in asylum or other humanitarian proceedings.

Are Afghans with physical and/or mental disabilities persecuted or otherwise detrimentally affected on account of their disabilities?

B. RESEARCH TIMEFRAME

Sources from FEBRUARY 1999 to JANUARY 2022 were consulted in the creation of this country conditions report.

C. SOURCES CONSULTED

Web sources were consulted in SEPTEMBER 2021 or JANUARY 2022.

I. *United Nations Reports*

- United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, [Preventing Torture and Upholding the Rights of Detainees in Afghanistan: A Factor for Peace](#) (Feb. 2021), last accessed Sept. 17, 2021.
- United Nations Human Rights Counsel, [Compilation on Afghanistan, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), A/HRC/WG-6/32/AFG/2-EN (Nov. 15, 2018), last accessed Sept. 17, 2021.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Afghanistan](#), HCR/EG/AFG/18/02 (Aug. 30, 2018), last accessed Sept. 17, 2021.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Afghanistan](#), HCR/EG/AFG/16/02 (Apr. 19, 2016), last accessed Sept. 17, 2021.
- United Nations Commission on Human Rights, [Report of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, M. Cherif Bassiouni](#), E/CN.4/2005/122-EN (Mar. 11, 2005), last accessed Sept. 17, 2021.
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Disability Inclusion Working Group – Afghanistan, [Afghanistan: International Day of Persons with Disabilities \(IDPD\)](#) (Dec. 3, 2021), last accessed Feb. 1, 2022.
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), [Humanitarian Needs Overview: Afghanistan](#) (Jan. 2022), last accessed Feb. 1, 2022.

II. *Government Reports*

- United States Department of State, [2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#) (Mar. 30, 2021).
- European Asylum Support Office, [Afghanistan: Key Socio-Economic Indicators: Focus on Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat City; Country of Origin Information Report](#) (Aug. 2020).

- United States Department of State, [2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#) (2019).
- United States Department of State, [2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#) (2018).
- United States Department of State, [Afghanistan Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2001](#) (Mar. 4, 2002).
- United States Department of State, [Afghanistan Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1998](#) (Feb. 26, 1999).

III. NGOs and Other International Organizations

- Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, [A Report on Human Rights Status of People with Disabilities in Afghanistan, Year 1399](#) (2020), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.
- Human Rights Watch, [“Disability Is Not Weakness”: Discrimination and Barriers Facing Women and Girls with Disabilities in Afghanistan](#) (2020), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.
- Human Rights Watch, [Afghanistan: Taliban Blocking Female Aid Workers](#) (Nov. 2021), last accessed Feb. 1, 2022.
- Norwegian Refugee Council, [Education in Emergencies: Children in Distress](#) (2018), last accessed Sept. 23, 2021.
- Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor, [Afghanistan Victim Assistance](#) (Oct. 30, 2017), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.
- Dr. Anicée Van Engeland, written Expert Opinion (June 11, 2017), in Asylos, [COI Compilation - Afghanistan: Situation of Young Male 'Westernised' Returnees to Kabul](#) (Aug. 2017), last accessed Sept. 23, 2021.
- Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, [A Report on Human Rights Status of People with Disabilities in Afghanistan, 1393](#) (2016), last accessed Sept. 23, 2021.
- Cooperazione Italiana, [The Comprehensive National Disability Policy in Afghanistan](#) (Oct. 2003), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.

IV. Media Reports

- NGO Daily News, [Afghanistan: Women with Disabilities Face Systemic Abuse](#) (Apr. 26, 2020), last accessed Sept. 2, 2021 on LexisNexis.

- Associated Press, [After years of war, Afghans wary to talk of mental health](#) (Aug. 18, 2016), last accessed Sept. 27, 2021.
- The Canadian Press, [Kandahar rehab centre treats forgotten victims of nine-year conflict](#) (Nov. 9, 2010), last accessed Sept. 2, 2021 on LexisNexis.

D. FINDINGS

I. Afghans with physical and/or mental disabilities are reportedly subject to physical and sexual violence, persecuted, stigmatized, harassed, humiliated, and denied basic health and governmental services and employment on account of their disabilities.

According to sources, Afghans with disabilities are considered a source of shame by their communities. As a result, they are frequently subjected to physical and sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination at the hands of governmental officials and community and family members. The challenges of living with disabilities in Afghanistan are particularly acute for women and children, and for those with mental illnesses or other similar disabilities who face particular stigma. In addition, Afghans with disabilities are denied access to necessary healthcare, education, and employment on account of their disabilities and regularly isolated, humiliated, and stigmatized.

Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination by Government Officials, Communities, and Family Members

- “People with disabilities are among the most vulnerable layers of the society, and they need special support from their families, the community, and, most importantly, the government and responsible institutions. **According to the findings of this study, 573 (38.1%) of those participated in the study reported that they had experienced violence at home and in the community because of their disability, and that they have been insulted, mocked and harassed. Among those who were abused and subjected to insults, humiliation, and harassment, 14 (2.4%) were victims of physical violence in the home and community, and 391 (68.2%) were deprived from support by the family members, people and government, 127 people (22.2%) were humiliated and insulted, 18 people (3.1%) were barred from entering public places and public gatherings, and 23 people (4%) were banned from traveling and socializing with friends and relatives.**”

Source: Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, [A Report on Human Rights Status of People with Disabilities in Afghanistan, Year 1399](#) (2020), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.

- “According to news agency Tolonews ‘**discrimination is the most significant and damaging barrier in Afghanistan for persons with disabilities.**’ People with disabilities in Afghanistan frequently have to overcome stigmatisation and attitudinal barriers in order to survive.”

Source: European Asylum Support Office, [Afghanistan: Key Socio-Economic Indicators: Focus on Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat City: Country of Origin Information Report](#) (Aug. 2020).

- “Persons with disabilities, including in particular persons with mental disabilities, and persons suffering from mental illnesses are reportedly

subjected to ill-treatment by members of society, including their own family members, on the grounds that their illness or disability is a punishment for sins committed by the persons affected or by their parents. Persons with disabilities face discrimination and limitations in access to employment, education and to adequate health care.”

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Afghanistan](#), HCR/EG/AFG/18/02 (Aug. 20, 2018), last accessed Sept. 17, 2021.

- **“UNAMA/OHCHR observed and remains concerned that some prisoners with psycho-social disabilities in the [Afghan National Army] prison of [Detention Facility in Parwan] remain in solitary confinement without adequate psychological or medical care, which may further constitute a violation of the obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which Afghanistan is a State party since 2012.”**

Source: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, [Preventing Torture and Upholding the Rights of Detainees in Afghanistan: A Factor for Peace](#) (Feb. 2021), last accessed Sept. 17, 2021.

- **“‘Here in Afghanistan people with disabilities are ignored from the societies, even from their families,’ said Ehsan. ‘So it creates lots of problems in their lives.’”**

Source: The Canadian Press, [Kandahar rehab centre treats forgotten victims of nine-year conflict](#) (Nov. 9, 2010), last accessed Sept. 2, 2021 on LexisNexis.

- **“According to the Asia Foundation, persons with disabilities ‘face a severe social stigma. When you ask Afghans how they perceive those who are blind, for example, some will say they see them as an incomplete person or blindness a ‘punishment from God.’ This stigma makes it challenging for them to overcome obstacles and contribute to their family’s welfare.”**

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Afghanistan](#), HCR/EG/AFG/18/02 (Aug. 30, 2018), last accessed Sept. 17, 2021 (citing Asia Foundation, [Overcoming Stigma Against Disabilities in Afghanistan](#) (Nov. 2, 2016).

Stigmatization of Afghans Born with Disabilities

- **“A 2004 research paper on Afghans perception on disabilities compiled on behalf of UNICEF and UNOPS/CDAP noted that Afghan society differentiates between a person who became disabled because of an accident, such as mine, car accident,**

disease etc. (Malul), and a person who is disabled at birth (Mayub). The Mayub is very often associated with birth-related mental and sensorial disabilities. **While for both categories there is perceived link between religion and disability, the Mayub disabilities in particular are said to be less understood and therefore considered to be ‘related to God’s will’. In addition, the research paper noted that ‘mayubiat, are seen as punishment of God on parents or the fault of the mother because she has done something wrong during pregnancy.’”**

Source: European Asylum Support Office, [Afghanistan: Key Socio-Economic Indicators: Focus on Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat City; Country of Origin Information Report](#) (Aug. 2020) (citing Altai Consulting, [Afghan Perceptions on Disability](#), pgs. 28-29 (Oct. 2004)).

- “‘The constitution prohibits any kind of discrimination and requires the provision of assistance to persons with disabilities, which include healthcare and financial protection. **In 2017, it was reported that ‘in practice, the situation is quite different and many persons with disabilities are deprived of basic rights.’**”

“Except the monthly pension, no other resources were allocated for victims or survivors directly. **Pensions are reported to be “totally insufficient” and not all persons with disabilities were eligible to receive them. Discrimination in the allocation and payment of pensions by which only war victims were entitled to benefits persisted.**”

Source: Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor, [Afghanistan Victim Assistance](#) (Oct. 30, 2017), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.

Harassment and Discrimination Against Women on Account of Disabilities

- “**‘Women with disabilities face further discrimination, due both to their gender and disability. According to Human Rights Watch ‘Afghan women and girls with disabilities face particular barriers to their rights, as gender discrimination and discrimination against persons with disabilities intersect. Too often, they describe social isolation, being humiliated in public or within their own families, being considered a source of shame for the family, and being denied access to public spaces and community or family social events. Afghan women with disabilities are often seen as unfit for marriage and a burden on their families.’** Similarly, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), reported in a March 2020 document that disabled women had limited access to healthcare.”

Source: European Asylum Support Office, [Afghanistan: Key Socio-Economic Indicators: Focus on Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat City; Country of Origin Information Report](#) (Aug. 2020).

- “Whether married or single, women with disabilities are often seen as a burden on their families and are at increased risk of violence both in and out of the home.

Afghan women who already face significant obstacles in finding work outside the home find those difficulties are compounded if they have a disability. As our research shows, Afghan women with disabilities who have sought government assistance or employment are at increased risk of sexual harassment within government institutions.”

Source: Human Rights Watch, [“Disability Is Not Weakness”: Discrimination and Barriers Facing Women and Girls with Disabilities in Afghanistan](#) (2020), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.

- **“According to NGOs advocating for the rights of women with disabilities in Afghanistan, sexual harassment against women with disabilities is a serious problem, particularly in government offices, including the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled. In order to qualify for government assistance, a person who has acquired a disability must get a statement from the Ministry of Public Health to determine the percentage of their disability and the date it occurred, bring this to the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, and then obtain a disability certificate. One NGO representative described the process:**

For women, getting this certificate is a disaster. Those who have applied have been harassed by the ministry staff, but we cannot talk about this issue publicly as it will make us more vulnerable.”

Source: Human Rights Watch, [“Disability Is Not Weakness”: Discrimination and Barriers Facing Women and Girls with Disabilities in Afghanistan](#) (2020), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.

- **“Businesswomen faced myriad challenges from the traditional nature of society and its norms with regard to acceptable behavior by women. When it was necessary for a businesswoman to approach the government for some form, permit, or authorization, it was common for a male functionary to ask for sexual favors or money in exchange for the authorization. In April, Human Rights Watch reported that a government employee, in front of other colleagues, told a woman with a disability he would process her disability certificate, which provides a stipend, if she had sex with him. The employee’s colleagues, according to her statement, laughed and said, “How do you want to get your disability card when you don’t want to sleep with us?” She reported that other women with disabilities had faced similar experiences when requesting disability certificates.”**

Source: United States Department of State, [2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#) (Mar. 30, 2021).

- **“Afghan women and girls with disabilities are frequently socially isolated, humiliated in public or within their own families, considered a source of shame for the family, or denied access to public spaces and community or**

family social events.”

Source: NGO Daily News, [Afghanistan: Women with Disabilities Face Systemic Abuse](#) (Apr. 26, 2020), last accessed Sept. 2, 2021 on LexisNexis.

Discrimination Against Children with Disabilities and Lack of Access to Educational Opportunities

- **“Children with disabilities are reported to be marginalised, and largely dependent on their families in order to access basic rights; some children are reportedly ‘shuttered away in homes, many excluded from schools, denied healthcare, and in extreme cases, abandoned’.”**

Source: European Asylum Support Office, [Afghanistan: Key Socio-Economic Indicators: Focus on Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat City; Country of Origin Information Report](#) (Aug. 2020).

- **“UNICEF noted that, ‘Children with disabilities also suffer from societal and government-based discrimination that greatly impedes their potential. Lack of access to appropriate health and education facilities, and weak understanding of disability rights, compound the challenges affecting the survival and development of children with disabilities. The existing structures cover only a fraction of the needs and are largely concentrated in a few urban centres. As a result, the vast majority of children with disabilities remain locked up at home, in the care of their mother, who may be completely overwhelmed by their needs.’”**

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Afghanistan](#), HCR/EG/AFG/16/02 (Apr. 19, 2016), last accessed Sept. 17, 2021 (citing UNICEF, *Children and Women in Afghanistan: A Situation Analysis* 2014 (Nov. 2014)).

- **“UNESCO noted that regular government schools typically had no institutionalized capacity to provide inclusive education or assist children with disabilities, often resulting in them dropping out of education. It encouraged Afghanistan to implement a system to identify, assess and meet the particular needs of children with disabilities.”**

Source: United Nations Human Rights Counsel, [Compilation on Afghanistan, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), A/HRC/WG-6/32/AFG/2-EN (Nov. 15, 2018), last accessed Sept. 17, 2021.

- **“According to a study conducted by MoE, UNICEF, and Samuel Hall in 2018, the groups of marginalised children who were disproportionately excluded from and deprived of access to school comprised children with**

disabilities (including psychosocial issues), children from ethnic, linguistic, and religious minority groups, children living in urban slums and on the street, children whose families migrate seasonally for work, and refugee and IDP children.”

Source: European Asylum Support Office, [Afghanistan: Key Socio-Economic Indicators: Focus on Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat City; Country of Origin Information Report](#) (Aug. 2020) (citing Afghanistan, MoE, UNICEF and Samuel Hall, [All in School and Learning: Global Initiative on Out-Of-School Children – Afghanistan Country Study](#), p.75 (June 2018))

- “This research was conducted in 22 provinces, including Punjshir, Parwan, Kandahar, Kunduz, Kabul, Wardak, Nimroz, Herat, Balkh, Bamian, Takhar, Baghlan, Daikundi, Samangan, Ghazni, Fariab, Farah, Paktia, Paktika, Jowzjan, Ghor and Khost and interviews were made with 883 persons with disability from different age groups. . . . 157 of the interviewees have completed their primary education, 102 of them have secondary education, 81 of them have completed high school, 31 of them have over baccalaureate education, and 10 of them have BA degree while 495 of them are illiterate. The total number of literate persons is 381 persons, which is very less [sic] compared to illiterate persons. The right of education for persons with disability is ensured by the national and international documents and the state should pay keen attention to the right of education for persons with disability. **The high level of illiteracy among persons with disability indicates that their access to education is limited and most of them are deprived of their right to education.”**

Source: Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, [A Report on Human Rights Status of People with Disabilities in Afghanistan, 1393](#) (2016), last accessed Sept. 23, 2021.

- “Education is a basic socio-economic human right and all children, including children with disabilities, have a right to education. The lack of proper education remains the key reasons for poverty and exclusion of all children from wider community affairs, both those with disabilities and the non-disabled. **Lack of education and marketable vocational training for children and youth with disabilities results in an absolute lack of opportunities for further personal development. It diminishes their access to employment, other income generating activities and business development.”**

Source: Cooperazione Italiana, [The Comprehensive National Disability Policy in Afghanistan](#) (Oct. 2003), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.

- “Despite the high number of children with physical or mental disabilities in the areas studied, very few centres include them. **Only four of the 22 classes observed included a child with a disability. Twenty-seven per cent of children, parents and teachers who participated in the questionnaire knew at**

least one school-aged child who was not attending school because of their disability.

“Many teachers said they did not include children with disabilities in their classes because they did not feel they had the capacity to teach them.

“None of the schools observed had access arrangements for children with physical disabilities, and a number had steps or raised platforms that would be difficult or impossible to negotiate for children with reduced mobility. Nor are classrooms equipped or material and activities appropriate for all, excluding children who are partially sighted, hard of hearing or mute. In one class in Nangarhar province, a child who was mute was left out of conversations and group work because he was not given time to write down his contributions.”

Source: Norwegian Refugee Council, [Education in Emergencies: Children in Distress](#) (2018), last accessed Sept. 23, 2021.

- **“An estimated 4.2 million children are out of school (60 per cent are girls), including children with disabilities, whose access to school is further limited by a combination of institutional, social, physical and financial barriers – children with disabilities often require personalized support and accommodation which, with very limited resources available, can rarely be guaranteed.”**

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), [Humanitarian Needs Overview: Afghanistan](#) (Jan. 2022), last accessed Feb.1, 2022.

Challenges Faced by Individuals with Mental Disabilities

- **“According to a 2018 MedCOI request, ‘people usually don’t want to keep their mental patients in a public mental health care hospital because of the harsh and careless interaction with the patients.’** Instead, people ‘who can afford it often choose private health care or travel abroad to Pakistan or India to get better treatment. This does not happen only for mental health care, but for other kinds of treatments as well.”

Source: European Asylum Support Office, [Afghanistan: Key Socio-Economic Indicators: Focus on Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat City; Country of Origin Information Report](#) (Aug. 2020).

- **“Afghanistan’s national mental health strategy estimated that half of all Afghans have a mental health problem, but as of February 2016 there was only one public mental health hospital in Afghanistan, located in Kabul. According to a 2019 Foreign Policy article, in Afghanistan, mental health facilities are scarce and mental health was not part of the resources provided by international aid, unlike vaccines and medicine. As of 2018, there was reportedly only one high-**

security psychiatric facility in Afghanistan, ‘where many of the patients are often chained and sedated’.”

Source: European Asylum Support Office, [Afghanistan: Key Socio-Economic Indicators: Focus on Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat City; Country of Origin Information Report](#) (Aug. 2020) (citing NPR, [Afghanistan’s Lone Psychiatric Hospital Reveals Mental Health Crisis Fueled By War](#) (Feb. 14, 2018).

- “‘Around 25 to 30 percent of Afghans have very high stress, anxiety and other psychological issues — the toll is getting higher day by day,’ Sarwary said.

“Also, ancient superstitions prevail, with **many across Afghanistan still attributing mental illnesses to being possessed by demons. An afflicted person can be locked up in a cage or left chained at a shrine for days on end.**

“Families often call in mullahs when they think a loved one has become ‘possessed by a djinn’ — a mythical spirit in Islam, similar to an angel, which can take human or animal form and influence behavior for either good or bad.

“After the Taliban killed her son, wounded her husband and burned her uncle alive, Zia Jan sank into a deep depression. Her family decided she had been possessed by a djinn. [...]

“‘People started saying I had a djinn, my family took me to the mullah a few times, and he said I had a djinn,’ she said. The mullah even performed an exorcism, but she only got worse.”

Source: Associated Press, [After years of warm, Afghans wary to talk of mental health](#) (Aug. 18, 2016), last accessed Sept. 27, 2021.

- “A survey found out that 72% of young Afghans have witnessed the loss of a family member. Families and communities are often torn apart for ethnic, political and war reasons. It is therefore not uncommon to find Afghans who have severed ties with their families and communities, or have been separated, willingly or not, and find themselves without any support. **Returnees fall under this category: a documentary demonstrates that returnees, whether they suffer from mental health issues or not, are isolated and tend to become homeless: it is almost impossible for them to go back where they lived as returning would be a death sentence.** [...]

“Those who have mental health problems face a double punishment: not only are they lonely, they also suffer from mental health disorders that will impact their interaction with others: there is a stigma associated with mental health problems.

“Returnees suffering from mental health disorders can sometimes be abandoned by their families: shame is often associated with mental health troubles as disorders are thought to be the result of demons (djinn) that have taken over an individual. As a result, some families chase the family member suffering from mental health issues or lead him to be chained in front of a shrine. Others are left to beg in the streets. In such circumstances, returnees become extremely vulnerable, as not only do they suffer from mental health issues; they are also unable to provide for themselves. They then become prey for drug traffic, prostitution, human smugglers, warlords or the Taliban.”

Source: Dr. Anicée Van Engeland, written Expert Opinion (June 11, 2017), in Asylos, [COI Compilation - Afghanistan: Situation of Young Male 'Westernised' Returnees to Kabul](#) (Aug. 2017), last accessed Sept. 23, 2021.

Lack of Access to Governmental Services and Economic Opportunities

- **“The disabled in Afghanistan face exceptional challenges, including difficulties accessing education, jobs, health care and social services, and disabled children rarely benefit from early interventions.”**

Source: United Nations Commission on Human Rights, [Report of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, M. Cherif Bassiouni](#), E/CN.4/2005/122-EN (Mar. 11, 2005), last accessed Sept. 17, 2021.

- **“Observers reported that both the constitutional provisions and disabilities rights law were mostly ignored and unenforced.**

“Persons with disabilities faced barriers such as limited access to educational opportunities, inability to access government buildings, difficulty in acquiring government identification required for many government services and voting, lack of economic opportunities, and social exclusion due to stigma.

“Lack of security remained a problem for disability programs. Insecurity in remote areas, where a disproportionate number of persons with disabilities lived, precluded delivery of assistance in some cases. The majority of buildings remained inaccessible to persons with disabilities, prohibiting many from benefitting from education, health care, and other services.”

Source: United States Department of State, [2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#) (Mar. 30, 2021).

- **“According to legislation, persons with disabilities should comprise 3% of state employees. In 2015, the Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee reported that many persons interviewed noted that numerous violations of the Law on the Rights and Privileges of Persons**

employment quota occurred due to bribery and nepotism that resulted in job opportunities being taken away from persons with disabilities.”

Source: Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor, [Afghanistan Victim Assistance](#) (Oct. 30, 2017), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.

- **“Human Rights Watch released a report in April in which a woman with a disability reported that Herat city offered no disability support services, including technical support for wheelchair damage. She told interviewers she was stranded indoors, unable to access recreational activities.**

Source: United States Department of State, [2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#) (Mar. 30, 2021).

- **“Disability rights activists reported that corruption prevented some persons with disabilities from receiving benefits. There were reports that government officials redirected scholarship funds for persons with disabilities to friends or family through fraud and identity theft. NGOs and government officials also reported that associations of persons with disabilities attempted to intimidate ministry employees in an effort to secure benefits such as apartments.”**

Source: United States Department of State, [2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#) (2019).

- **“The constitution prohibits any kind of discrimination against citizens and requires the state to assist persons with disabilities and to protect their rights, including the rights to health care and financial protection. The constitution also requires the state to adopt measures to reintegrate and provide for the active participation in society of persons with disabilities. The Law on the Rights and Benefits of Disabled Persons provides for equal rights to, and the active participation of, such persons in society. Observers reported that both the constitution and disabilities rights law are mostly ignored and unenforced.”**

Source: United States Department of State, [2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#) (2018).

- **“There are few measures to protect the rights of the mentally and physically disabled or to mandate accessibility for them.”**

Source: United States Department of State, [Afghanistan Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1998](#) (Feb. 26, 1999).

- **“Women with disabilities face enormous obstacles in getting a job. According to the Community Centre for the Disabled, 90 percent of persons with disabilities are unemployed. Under the Law on Rights and Privileges of Persons with Disabilities, 3 percent of jobs in government and the private sector are to be**

reserved for persons with disabilities. However, the AIHRC found that the number of employees with disabilities working in government offices was less than 1 percent. . . .

“A government official responsible for social and support services acknowledged the problem: . . .

An extensive and appropriate awareness program about the qualifications of people with disabilities has not been conducted for the public institutions to assure them that disability is not incompetence and that disability does not impede their working potential. . . .”

Source: Human Rights Watch, [“Disability Is Not Weakness”: Discrimination and Barriers Facing Women and Girls with Disabilities in Afghanistan](#) (2020), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.

- **“The overwhelming majority of disabled Afghans and their families experience social and economic deprivation and many of their basic rights are denied by institutional structure. Poverty and unemployment are key factors for perpetuating the exclusion of disabled people, but at the same time both can be a result of disability. The political and economic inequality compounded by negative social attitudes has perpetuated a stereotype of disabled people as dependent and drain on public resources. This has led to institutional discrimination against them primarily by denying them access to services because of many disabling barriers. Legislations that fail to protect the rights of disabled people also lead to discrimination. . . .”**

Source: Cooperazione Italiana, [The Comprehensive National Disability Policy in Afghanistan](#) (Oct. 2003), last accessed Sept. 16, 2021.

- **“The emergency situation in Afghanistan often disproportionately impacts persons with disabilities and their households and the COVID-19 pandemic, has been no exception. People with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to intensify the existing inequalities and vulnerabilities as people with disabilities encompass a variety of conditions and impairments and have faced many barriers throughout the pandemic. The collapse of the government and international sanctions have further exacerbated the situation.”**

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Disability Inclusion Working Group – Afghanistan, [Afghanistan: International Day of Persons with Disabilities \(IDPD\)](#) (Dec. 3, 2021), last accessed Feb. 1, 2022.

- **“Female aid workers in Afghanistan play an important role in reaching and assessing the needs of women and girls and female-headed households, especially**

because the society is often deeply segregated by gender. **The lack of women aid workers also means that women with disabilities have less access to rehabilitative services.”**

Source: Human Rights Watch, [Afghanistan: Taliban Blocking Female Aid Workers](#) (Nov. 2021), last accessed Feb. 1, 2022.