



An open letter to governments and humanitarian agencies in relation to the Afghanistan crisis

There is a long history of LGBTQI+ people in Afghanistan being disproportionately targeted and subject to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic sexual violence, forced marriages, honour killings, conversion practices and execution. Simply being LGBTQI+ will, under the rule of the Taliban, mean extra-judicial executions and the death penalty.

Whether at home in Afghanistan or in flight, LGBTQI+ Afghans are a hidden population, and their lives are at great risk.

Without a strong LGBTQI+ civil society in the region, LGBTQI+ Afghans are reliant on governments and international humanitarian organisations for safety both in Afghanistan and when they seek haven elsewhere.

Active consideration of the needs of LGBTQI+ Afghans by governments and humanitarian agencies is urgently required both in Afghanistan and now as they flee the country in search of a safe haven.

Experience shows that LGBTQI+ people are not adequately accounted for in humanitarian crises and when in flight. In some cases, those who should be able to provide them with the support they need do not have the skills, experience and depth of programmes to do so. Some organisations openly discriminate against LGBTQI+ people and do not hold their staff to account for violating their rights. We have reports already of LGBTQI+ Afghans who have been put at risk of grave human rights abuses because of the failure, and even open hostility, of those charged with the responsibility to protect and assist them.

Urgent coordinated efforts are needed to support the safe passage, ensure in-country protection and ideally, the resettlement of our LGBTQI+ Afghan siblings.

As we move into the next phase of support for Afghans at risk, we call on you to:

1. Address the particular risks faced by LGBTQI+ Afghans in your ongoing negotiations for safe zones and safe passage for those seeking to flee Afghanistan.

2. Call upon neighbouring states to keep their borders open and to ensure the protection of those seeking refuge in keeping with their international commitments, including emergency humanitarian support tailored to LGBTQI+ Afghans needs at all stages of their migration.
3. Dedicate expertise and resources to develop protection programmes tailored to LGBTQI+ Afghans working in close cooperation with LGBTQI+ civil society organisations with proven expertise in this area.
4. Hold an urgent cross-agency meeting to bring together resettlement countries, resettlement agencies, and LGBTQI+ civil society and experts to ensure a robust process is developed for the assessment, protection, and relocation of LGBTQI+ Afghans seeking asylum.
5. Prioritise LGBTQI+ people as a priority in Afghan resettlement programmes and commit to building safe, robust and accountable processes for determining their need for protection in countries where they seek haven.

We can only ensure the safety of LGBTQI+ Afghans by working together, across governments, humanitarian agencies, and LGBTQI+ civil society.

LGBTQI+ Afghans need your leadership now.



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