Urgent: Call on Pakistani Government to Prevent Deportation of Afghan Christians

Ministry of Interior
Block R, Pak Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan 44000

Prime Caretaker Interior Minister Bugti,

We, the undersigned, are a concerned group of _____ + individuals from _____ countries, who are deeply troubled by Pakistan’s decision to deport Christians and religious minority refugees back to Afghanistan. Your decision puts thousands of Christians and those of other faiths in physical danger and potentially life-threatening situations simply for their beliefs. Further, international law prohibits refoulement or the forced return of refugees and asylum seekers to countries where they are likely to face persecution. After the fall of Afghanistan, more than half-a-million Afghans sought refuge from the Taliban in your country. Pakistan should be commended for welcoming these refugees in the wake of the Taliban’s return to power. The expediated nature of the fallout created a humanitarian crisis and forced many religious minorities to flee, restricting their ability to comply with best practices and obtain proper legal documentation through normal channels. Additionally, a number of Afghan refugees are actively awaiting relocation to the United States through a program that requires temporarily relocating to a third-party country before becoming eligible for processing to travel to the United States.

We are certain that more than 1,000 Afghan Christian refugees fled to Pakistan to escape certain persecution and potentially even death under the Taliban.

The Taliban’s strict interpretation of Islam remains unchanged from when it previously ruled over two decades ago. For Afghan Christians who were not as fortunate to escape, we know that they have been captured, tortured, and killed when discovered by the Taliban. The same treatment is given to other vulnerable people groups, such as journalists and others who worked with religious and secular international NGOs.
Therefore, we urge you to protect the lives of Christians and other religious minorities who have sought refuge in Pakistan by granting them safe harbor and permitting them to stay.

We encourage you, Minister Bugti, to uphold Pakistan’s commitment to non-refoulment, which according to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, is “an implicit guarantee flowing from the obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights.”

Pakistan has the opportunity to show the world its leadership in tolerance and inclusivity through a public commitment to extending mercy to those fleeing persecution in neighboring countries.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

International Christian Concern
(undersigned)