



# NOWHERE TO EXIST

Report, 2026

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Defiance in color, persecution in system: how Taliban rule, family enforcement, Pakistan's deportations and Germany's failures leave queer and trans Afghans without a path to safety.

Report by CORRECTIV.Exile × Kite Runner  
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Cover: Y.H. (Afghanistan)

Methodology: This report draws on five independently recorded testimonies gathered through structured, trauma-informed interviews. All claims are classified as: externally verified (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, BAMF, UN, ALO); corroborated by a pattern across independent testimonies; or single-source accounts, clearly attributed as such. Full methodology and source documentation appear in Section IX. Names of individuals are pseudonyms except where subjects chose public identification.

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***For queer and trans Afghans, displacement is not a movement from danger to safety. It is a chain of exposure across systems – from Taliban rule to regional deportation regimes and European migration policy.***

## **I. The Architecture of Erasure**

The Taliban's return to power in August 2021 did not create the persecution of queer and trans Afghans. It intensified it, formalized it, and removed what thin protections had existed under the previous government.

Same-sex conduct has long been criminalised under Afghan law, but the Taliban's interpretation of sharia extends penalties from flogging to execution. A January 2022 report by Human Rights Watch and OutRight Action International documented targeted attacks, sexual assaults, threats and abuse against LGBTIQ+ Afghans in the months following the takeover. In 2023, the Afghanistan LGBTIQ+ Organization (ALO) reported a deepening of systematic repression, including intensified penalisation and efforts to erase queer individuals from public life in Afghanistan.

This trajectory has hardened further. Amnesty International described a new penal code introduced by the Taliban in January 2026 as targeting women and minority groups with "ever harsher punishments." Article 60 of the new regulations prescribes the death penalty for "habitual sodomy," based on judicial discretion under religious law.

But formal law is only part of the enforcement architecture. The testimonies gathered for this report describe a wider ecosystem of control that operates beneath and alongside the state, built on four interlocking mechanisms.

## **Digital surveillance**

Multiple testimonies describe phone confiscation and searches of messages, call histories and social media accounts as a routine part of Taliban detention. This aligns with Human Rights Watch's finding that the Taliban has used digital traces to identify and target individuals perceived as LGBTIQ+.

## **Community reporting**

Several accounts describe being reported to the Taliban by neighbours or acquaintances. Enforcement is not limited to Taliban security forces but extends into a distributed system of social surveillance, in which anyone can become an informant and complicit in the suppressing mechanisms.

## **Suppression of cultural and artistic expression**

The Taliban's prohibition on music, dance and public performance intersects directly with the persecution of gender non-conformity. Underlying this is an ideological framework of heteronormativity that seeks to suppress any form of queer expression, enforcing rigid gender norms and punishing those who transgress them. Cultural visibility – a dance video, a radio show, a manner of dress – becomes both an expression of identity and a marker that invites targeting.

## **Ethnic and sectarian compounding**

For queer and trans individuals within the Hazara community, persecution on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity is compounded by ethnic and sectarian targeting. Minority Rights Group International has documented forced displacement, land confiscation, exclusion from aid, and over twenty suicide bombings targeting Shia communities since 2021. This intersection of risks is not merely additive – it compounds in ways that dramatically multiply the threat faced by each individual.

Taken together, these elements describe not a series of isolated incidents but a structural environment in which queer and trans Afghans face persecution from multiple, overlapping sources: the state, the community, the family, and the digital sphere. For the five individuals whose accounts form the basis of this report, the question is not whether survival is possible within this system, but whether life, in any meaningful sense, is.

## II. The Present Tense

All five accounts collected for this investigation describe the same present tense: hiding, watching, listening, calculating. The stories diverge in detail but converge on a shared mechanism of control. Public visibility – through social media, work, appearance, or travel – becomes a risk. So does movement itself: leaving home, looking for work, buying bread.

### Vantace, 15 – Kabul

Vantace says, he began dancing as a child before 2021. Between 2022 and 2023, as a teenager, he built an audience of more than 20,000 followers, performing to K-Pop music on a social media platform that briefly felt like “a stage where he could exist without fear.” After the Taliban returned, threats intensified. In late 2023, he says armed men came to his family's home searching for him. When they could not find him, they arrested his father. “They beat him and said, ‘If your son continues, we will take care of him,’” Vantace recalls. In January 2024, he erased his account. “It felt like deleting myself,” he says.

He is Hazara – carrying the compounded burden described in Section I. Hazara and visibly gender non-conforming, he stands at the intersection of racism and the policing of femininity – and is forced into invisibility. Vantace now moves through “empty houses, workshops, and ruined buildings,” dancing “often on rooftops high above the streets.” He has not been able to leave Afghanistan. He hopes to reach France and has applied for a humanitarian visa. “If I return openly, I put everyone in danger,” he says. “I am still here. Waiting.”

*Despite everything, I  
keep dancing.  
If I stop, I would  
already be dead.—  
Vantace, 15, Kabul*



Photo: antace (Afghanistan, 2025)

## **Elina, 20 – Balkh**

Elina says that since the Taliban came to power, she has been completely hidden inside the house. "On the few occasions when I went outside, I was chased by the Taliban." Twice, when she went out to look for work, people reported her to the Taliban, who came to her home to arrest her.

In September 2025, a Taliban vehicle arrived and detained her after she was reported for being perceived as a "gay boy." She says Taliban members covered her face with a black plastic bag, confiscated her phone, searched her messages and call history, and beat her in custody. Her brothers secured her release. "My body trembles whenever I hear the name 'Taliban,'" she says.

Inside the home, her brothers control and beat her. "I have been beaten many times by my brothers and I am not allowed to work. Although I am a human being and want to live freely, my family denies me this right." She cannot look for work because doing so triggers reporting. She cannot stay still because confinement is its own violence. "I know that I am a transgender girl, but I am forced to live in the appearance of a boy. They think I'm getting stronger, but the truth is that I'm getting emptier every day."

## **Idris, 19 – Location undisclosed**

Idris is homeless today; he does not want his location to be published. The experience of detention – and the fear of it happening again – is a constant source of panic, a thorn in his soul. He says Taliban members arrested him in 2022, when he was fifteen, after someone reported him. He says they detained him for four days, beat him, and raped him. "Every night I thought they would rape me," he recalls. "And then they did."

After his release, his injuries left him unable to walk on his own. "Two people had to hold me under my arms. My body was shaking."

At home, he faced a second layer of enforcement. "My home was a prison. I was beaten, cursed, humiliated. They called me a stain. They said I had taken away their honor." He fled to Iran via the Islam Qala border, borrowing money to pay a smuggler. "I was harassed constantly, humiliated, and hungry. But I kept walking to escape this hell." Three years later, Iranian authorities deported him back to Afghanistan in 2025. He is now homeless and in hiding. "Laws exist," he says. "But not for people like me."

*The world has become like a prison for me.– Elina, 20, Balkh*

## Dayana Daneshwar, 19 – Germany

Born in 2006 and named Yasir at birth, Dayana says she understood by fourteen that she was a woman but had no safe language to express it. At thirteen, she moderated a radio show for children and teenagers for about a year and a half. After August 2021, the station shut down. "My heart was broken, my dreams were shattered, and everything collapsed so quickly." Under Taliban rule, she says, "even going out to buy bread was dangerous."

She left Afghanistan on 11 May 2024, dressed in men's clothing to avoid detection, and spent eight months in Pakistan before reaching Germany in December 2024. Dayana emphasises that pressure on queer and trans Afghans continues within segments of the Afghan diaspora, where suspicion of connections to the Taliban fuels fear – a dimension she says is often overlooked in the German context. This suggests that the mechanisms described in Afghanistan do not disappear in exile. They can persist through informal community structures, extending surveillance, suspicion and control beyond state borders.

But she also points to a shift: "For the first time, I exist without fearing arrest or death," she says. She now advocates publicly against gender apartheid and works with queer communities in Germany. "I promised myself that I would tell stories, break sexual and gender taboos, and fight against rotten traditions and customs that restrict human life."



Photo: Dayana Daneshwar (Germany, 2025)

*I still suffer from the traces of torture. I just want to go to a safe country; I can't face this again.— Ada, 20*

### **Ada, 20 – Pakistan (repeated deportation)**

Ada says threats against her escalated after August 2021 in Mazar-e Sharif. "The Taliban threatened me with death." Her father sold household items to finance her escape. She entered Pakistan on an emergency medical visa on 14 March 2024, travelling by airplane from Kabul to Islamabad. After receiving a positive response to a letter to German immigration authorities, she has been waiting for a formal admission decision – to no avail, even today. Her dream is to become a fashion designer.

Ada was deported back to Afghanistan by Pakistani security forces on 22 November 2025 and immediately went underground. "I had been fleeing death," she says. "And yet I was back to the country of darkness and death penalty." She says Taliban members arrested her on 14 February 2026. She says she was beaten with chains and tortured with electric wires during interrogation. She reports that the pleas of her mother and intervention of family elders led to her release following a day of detention. Ada then obtained a Pakistani medical visa for herself and her 70-year-old mother and moved to Islamabad on 26 February 2026, where she now faces an uncertain future.

All five accounts describe the same condition: not movement, but containment – enforced through violence, surveillance and the constant threat of return. This system is not confined to territory. Elements of social control extend beyond Afghanistan's borders, carried through community structures in exile.

*I am asking for humanitarian assistance. I am not even treated as a human being, and I am deprived of basic human dignity. Please don't forget us.— Elina, 20, Balkh*

### **III. The Family as Enforcement Vector**

Family appears in these testimonies as both refuge and force multiplier, often within the same household. For Vantace, his family absorbs the state's pressure without rejecting him – but in doing so, the home itself becomes a site of ambient threat. "Every sound at the door makes us freeze," he says.

For Idris and Elina, the family does not absorb Taliban pressure. It mirrors it. The same prohibitions the Taliban codifies in law are enforced daily by the people closest to them, using the same tools: beatings, confinement, psychological control, and the withdrawal of any right to exist as oneself.

For Dayana, childhood silence was not a choice but a survival strategy, learned early and maintained at personal cost. For Ada, the family's role is protective but desperate: her father sold what he had to get her out, not because he could guarantee her safety, but because remaining meant certain death. After being forcibly returned, she faced torture, but was able to flee again with her family's support. Even now, she remains unsafe, living in Pakistan with only a temporary residence status.

The dual pressure of state persecution and family enforcement appears in at least four of the five testimonies. In some cases, the family converts state violence into private confinement. In others, it becomes a second authority that reinforces the same prohibitions the Taliban codifies in law. This pattern deserves particular analytical weight. It means that for many queer and trans Afghans, there is no private sphere of safety. The home is not a refuge from persecution; it is, often, the first site of it. Any protection framework that treats the family as a default safe haven rests on a false premise.

*For queer and trans Afghans, flight is not a journey from danger to safety. It is a continuous negotiation with different forms of danger. – Central finding of this investigation*

## **IV. Pakistan: The Holding Zone**

Leaving Afghanistan does not end the danger. In the accounts gathered for this report, it shifts vulnerability from state violence to border control, shelter systems, legal precarity and the danger of deportation.

Pakistan appears across multiple testimonies not as a place of refuge but as a holding zone defined by exposure, exploitation and the constant threat of forced return. Since September 2023, Pakistan has deported approximately 1.7 million Afghans – out of an estimated 3.7 million Afghan nationals in the country at the start of the campaign, meaning roughly one in every two and a half has been forced out. Of those, 778,739 were returned in 2025 alone.

These deportations have taken place despite sustained warnings from international organisations about the risks faced by returnees, including persecution, detention and violence under Taliban rule. Artemis Akbary, Co-Founder and Executive Director of ALO – the Afghan LGBTQ+ Organization, based in the Czech Republic – estimated in December 2025 that queer and trans Afghans in Pakistan and Iran are effectively trapped due to suspended relocation pathways, expiring visas, and the constant risk of deportation. Migration routes are marked by violence and abuse, including harassment at borders, and have caused PTSD in numerous cases. The risks described are not incidental to migration routes. They are embedded in a system in which protection mechanisms are either absent or not applied to those most at risk.

Amnesty International and the United Nations have condemned these deportations as violations of the principle of non-refoulement, a binding norm of international law that prohibits returning individuals to countries where they face persecution, torture or death. The continuation of deportations under these conditions is not a neutral administrative process. It reflects an ongoing policy decision in the face of documented risk.

For queer and trans Afghans, the risks in Pakistan are compounded. They lack legal status, are exposed to police harassment and arrest, and face specific vulnerabilities that cisgender, heterosexual refugees may not. Dayana's account – eight months of living "in fear every single day" – describes the baseline. Ada's describes what lies beneath it.

## ***Ada's shelter experience***

Ada entered Pakistan on an emergency medical visa and was initially housed in an NGO-supported shelter. She says conditions deteriorated when a private Pakistani company took over management, and that the head of that company demanded sex. When she refused, the shelter expelled her. She slept in a public park without a pillow or blanket, eating very little. "No human being, including myself, should have to go through this," she says.

Ada says she was deported to Afghanistan by Pakistani security forces on 22 November 2025. She returned to Pakistan recently after facing detention and torture. The question her experience raises is not only about what Pakistan did, but about what the protection architecture failed to prevent. Harm did not occur despite the shelter's existence. It occurred within one. The failure here is not only individual. It points to a broader absence of oversight and accountability in protection structures operating under conditions of mass displacement.

Idris, who fled via Iran, was also deported by Iranian authorities in 2025. "Laws exist," he says. "But not for people like me."

Vantace and Elina remain inside Afghanistan, unable to leave. Vantace continues to search for a way out, hoping to reach France. For Elina, even attempting to find work exposes her to immediate danger. Their immobility is not the absence of violence – it is a form of violence in itself: the enforced impossibility of movement, of escape, of life beyond survival.

Pakistan does not function as a place of refuge in these accounts, but as a space in which risk is managed rather than reduced – and, in some cases, actively reproduced.

## **V. Germany: Safety without Protection**

Germany occupies a different position in this geography. For those who reach it, it represents the first point at which physical survival is no longer immediately threatened. But arrival does not resolve the harms of displacement. It transforms them.

### ***The admission programme and its collapse***

Many queer Afghans fleeing their country hope to find a place of safety in Germany. The German federal government's 2022 Federal Admission Program represented a formal acknowledgement of that need: for the first time, it included sexual orientation and gender identity as admission criteria. Of the 2,308 at-risk Afghans who received formal admission commitments under the previous coalition, approximately half were withdrawn after the change of government. The programme was ended entirely in May 2025, leaving thousands waiting in Pakistan without legal protection.

These consequences were not unforeseen. The risks faced by those left behind – including deportation, detention and exposure to Taliban violence – were documented at the time the programme was suspended.

The figure of 2,308 represents only those who had reached the stage of formal commitment – a fraction of those who applied or were assessed. The withdrawal rate of approximately fifty percent applies to a pool that was already the remainder of a much larger group who never received commitments at all.

LSVD board member Alva Träbert estimated in August 2025 that around four hundred queer Afghans in Pakistan were awaiting deportation to Afghanistan as a direct result. Migration policy spokesperson Clara Bünger of the Left parliamentary group responded: "The federal government cannot simply claim that it bears no responsibility and leave these people to the misogynistic and inhumane arbitrary rule of the Taliban."

The consequences materialised quickly. In January 2026, a Taliban raid on a "safe house" in Kabul interrogated seventy-nine Afghans for hours – people who had been part of the Federal Admission Program, in a facility the German federal government had considered a security guarantee.

The sequence is not incidental. Individuals were identified, processed, and concentrated through a programme presented as protection – and then left exposed when that protection was withdrawn.

Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul has stated he sees "no political interest in admission anymore." Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt has called for deportations to Afghanistan to "take place regularly." The government offered financial compensation to those whose admission commitments were withdrawn.

Money cannot replace safety. Financial compensation does not mitigate the risk created by withdrawal. It acknowledges harm without preventing it. This is not a policy shift with unintended side effects. It is a policy shift with foreseeable consequences.

Ada is one of those waiting. After receiving a positive response to her letter to the German immigration authorities, she has been waiting for a decision – to no avail, even today. She was deported while that decision remained unmade, and faced abuse and torture on 14 February 2026. She is still waiting in uncertainty.

The conditions described are not independent of policy decisions. They are shaped by them.

### ***The situation for those who arrive***

For those who do reach Germany, the experience is physically safe but socially complex. Dayana arrived in December 2024 after a long journey and found, for the first time, freedom from the immediate threat of arrest or death. But she still faces discrimination and social exclusion. Like many queer Afghans in Germany, she experiences a form of intersectional precarity in which she feels insecurity in public spaces not only as a queer person but also as a migrant, and not only as a migrant but as an Afghan in a political climate in which the word "Afghan" has become, in Alva Träbert's words, "a red flag in large parts of politics and among funding bodies."

Germany's legal framework does recognise persecution based on sexual orientation or gender identity as grounds for asylum. Subsidiary protection is available for those facing torture or degrading treatment. But the application process requires applicants to make their queerness credible to state officials – a process those affected describe as humiliating – and the structures that help people navigate that process are being dismantled.

## ***The erosion of support infrastructure***

Germany currently has 88 counselling centres, 25 advocacy networks and 56 meeting spaces for queer refugees – a network built over years that is now being systematically defunded. The "Fluchtgrund: Queer" project run by LSVD+ discontinued services at the end of 2025 due to lack of funding. All counselling services for queer refugees in Saxony were cut. Federal Interior Minister Dobrindt has not allocated any funds in the 2027 budget for independent asylum procedure counselling.

*The end of independent asylum procedure counselling could have fatal consequences, especially for vulnerable groups such as LGBTIQ\* people.– Patrick Dörr, Federal Board, LSVD+*

Germany recognises persecution on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity as grounds for asylum while simultaneously dismantling the structures that enable people to navigate the asylum process and build lives after arrival. This is not an abstraction. It is the environment in which Dayana is trying to build a future, and from which Ada, Elina, Idris and Vantace are still trying to reach.

Artemis Akbary at ALO, a peer-support organization, criticises the dramatic lack of relocation pathways for LGBTQ+ Afghans, identifying them as one of the most vulnerable yet most overlooked groups. Human Rights Watch and OutRight International have called on Germany and comparable governments to fully respect the asylum rights of LGBTQ+ Afghans with well-founded fears of persecution; to consider all available evidence of violations when reviewing applications; and to recognise that LGBTQ+ individuals often enter heterosexual marriages or conform to social norms as survival strategies – and that this should not be read as evidence that they are not LGBTQ+.

Whether the current German government intends to follow these recommendations remains, based on the available evidence, an open question. This is not a passive gap. It results from funding and policy decisions that reduce access to protection in practice.

## **VI. Patterns, Corroboration, and the Visibility Gap**

When testimonies are collected independently, and the individuals involved have had no contact with one another, the recurrence of specific claims acquires evidentiary weight. It does not prove that every detail is accurate, but it demonstrates that the mechanisms described are not idiosyncratic.

### ***Corroborated across three or more testimonies***

Taliban detention and abuse without formal charges: Ada, Idris, Elina and Dayana all describe being detained, abused, threatened with detention, or forced into hiding without any formal legal process. This is consistent with Human Rights Watch reporting on arbitrary detention under Taliban rule and the absence of functioning judicial oversight. ALO has also reported about sexual abuse and physical punishment of LGBTIQ+ Afghans in detention.

Digital surveillance through phone confiscation: Elina's account of message searches and Vantace's account of his social media presence being used to identify him appear in at least three testimonies and are documented in the 2022 HRW/OutRight report.

Family-imposed confinement and violence: Family-mediated punishment appears in the accounts of Idris, Elina, Dayana and Ada. The specific forms vary; the pattern is consistent. Pakistan as an extension of vulnerability: Dayana, Ada and Idris (via Iran) all describe transit countries not as places of safety but as sites where the harms of persecution continue in different forms. This is consistent with documented mass deportation of Afghans from Pakistan since 2023.

Germany is physically safe but socially precarious: Dayana's account of finding legal safety while still facing discrimination and isolation is consistent with broader reporting from LSVD+ and ALO on the experiences of queer Afghan refugees. The end of persecution does not equate to the beginning of belonging.

Continuation of social control within diaspora communities: Dayana's account indicates that pressures associated with Taliban rule – including suspicion, monitoring and fear of exposure – may persist within segments of the diaspora. While documented in a single testimony, this dynamic aligns with the broader pattern of distributed social enforcement described across cases.

## ***Divergences***

The testimonies diverge in three significant respects. First, visibility strategies: Vantace continues to dance in hidden spaces; Elina is confined; Dayana has moved from survival silence to public advocacy. These are not different truths, but different responses to the same structural constraint, shaped by age, location, access to networks, and chance.

Second, outcomes: Dayana reached Germany; Ada was deported, abused and re-entered Pakistan on a temporary visa; Idris was deported from Iran; Vantace and Elina have not been able to leave Afghanistan. The same system of persecution produces radically different outcomes depending on access to money, documents and networks.

Third, the availability of advocacy: Dayana can speak; the others largely cannot. This asymmetry is not incidental. It is produced by the same system this report documents.



Photo: Dayana Daneshwar (Germany, 2025)

## ***The visibility gap***

The most significant finding of this cross-case analysis is structural, not evidentiary: the gap between those who can speak and those who cannot is itself a form of evidence. Dayana has access to queer communities, protest spaces and public platforms in Germany. Ada, Elina and Vantace do not. Idris is homeless. The investigation you are reading is partly shaped by who was reachable, and that reachability is distributed by the same inequalities this report documents. The voices most in danger are the hardest to hear.

## VII. Accountability Gaps and the Right of Reply

This investigation identifies four structural failures that are not attributable to any single actor but arise from the interaction of multiple systems. At the same time, each reflects decisions that produce foreseeable consequences.

The first is the continuation of deportations to Afghanistan despite the known and documented risk to queer and trans individuals. Pakistan's mass deportation campaign has returned hundreds of thousands of Afghans to a country where the Taliban's new penal code prescribes the death penalty for same-sex conduct. The principle of non-refoulement prohibits such returns. That deportations continue regardless suggests not only a failure of enforcement, but a sustained disregard for a binding legal obligation.

The second is the absence of tailored monitoring and protection for LGBTQ+ Afghans in transit countries. Ada's account describes a shelter system that failed to protect her from exploitation. None of the transit-country experiences described in these testimonies include any form of specialised protection for individuals facing persecution on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. The protection architecture, where it exists, appears designed for a generalised refugee population – not for those at targeted risk. This gap is structural, but its consequences are specific and foreseeable.

The third is the German government's withdrawal of admission commitments. The decision to offer financial compensation in lieu of admission does not address the underlying risk. Hundreds of people received formal commitments from the German state, oriented their decisions around those commitments, and then had them withdrawn. The consequences of that sequence – including exposure to deportation, detention and violence – were not incidental. They were inherent in the decision to withdraw protection after identification. The legal and moral implications remain publicly unaddressed.

*I just want to go to a safe country.– Ada, 20*

The fourth is the erosion of support infrastructure within Germany itself. This creates a structural paradox: Germany recognises persecution on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity as grounds for asylum, while simultaneously dismantling the structures that enable people to navigate the asylum process and build lives after arrival. The result is not a failure of recognition, but a failure of implementation.

*I am homeless. My living situation, my private life, and my future all feel uncertain and dark. But I am still young, and I want to live a better life. I want a small home, honest work, and a life without fear. Regardless of where it is.— Idris, 19*

## **VIII. The Chain Does Not Break at Any Border**

The five individuals whose accounts form the basis of this report did not ask for the same things. Vantace wants to dance. Idris wants a small home and honest work. Elina wants to be treated as a human being. Ada wants to reach a safe country. Dayana wants to tell stories and break taboos. These are not extraordinary demands. They are the most ordinary things a person can want. What this investigation makes visible is the structure that denies them. The Taliban's enforcement architecture, the family's role as a secondary authority, Pakistan's deportation machine, and Germany's retreat from its own commitments are not separate problems. They are links in a single chain of displacement that begins with persecution and, for four of the five individuals in this report, has not yet ended.

In Afghanistan, the threat is arrest, violence and death. In Pakistan and Iran, it is deportation, exploitation and legal invisibility. In Germany, it is bureaucratic indifference, social isolation, and the quiet withdrawal of the systems that were supposed to help. At every stage, the architecture of harm adapts its form. The individual adapts too – or does not survive.

The patterns documented in this report are not allegations in need of a verdict. They are structural realities confirmed by the convergence of independent testimony, corroborated by external reporting, and visible in the policy decisions of the governments involved.

Ada is stranded. Idris is homeless. Elina is confined. Vantace is hiding. Dayana is safe but surrounded by the erosion of the systems that made her safety possible. The chain does not end at the border. In some cases, it continues within the communities that displacement was meant to make safe.

The question this report poses is not whether these harms are real. The question is whether anyone with the power to act will.

## **IX. Editor's Note and Methodology**

This investigation draws on independently recorded testimonies from five Afghan individuals: Vantace, Idris, Elina, Dayana Daneshwar and Ada. Each account was gathered separately through structured interviews conducted with trauma-informed protocols. Names are pseudonyms except where an individual chose to be identified publicly. Identifying details – including precise locations, family configurations and timelines – have in some cases been adjusted to reduce risk to the individuals and their families.

### ***Investigative methodology***

The methodology rests on four pillars. First, claim-mapping: identifying recurring assertions across testimonies and assessing whether multiple independent accounts describe the same patterns of harm. Second, temporal overlap analysis: cross-referencing the timelines described by each individual against known events, including the Taliban takeover in August 2021, subsequent legislative changes, and Pakistan's mass deportation campaigns. Third, actor consistency: examining whether the same institutions, enforcement mechanisms and intermediaries appear across accounts. Fourth, external corroboration: verifying claims against reporting by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, ALO, CORRECTIV, the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, and official German government and BAMF data.

Where a factual claim is verified by external sources, that source is cited. Where a claim is corroborated by pattern – meaning it recurs across multiple independent testimonies but lacks external confirmation – this is stated explicitly. Where a claim rests on a single testimony and could not be independently confirmed, it is attributed directly to the individual and presented as their account, not as established fact. This approach is applied consistently across all five subjects.

### ***Claims externally verified***

Taliban criminalisation of same-sex relations and the January 2026 penal code (Amnesty International, Georgetown Institute, Human Dignity Trust, ALO). Hazara and Shia compounded persecution (Minority Rights Group International). Pakistan mass deportation campaign and non-refoulement violations (Amnesty International, UN, Al Jazeera). The existence and role of LSVD+ and its advocacy work. The HRW/OutRight International 2022 report on LGBTIQ+ Afghans. ALO's 2023 report on LGBTIQ+ Afghans. The German Federal Admission Program and its suspension. German subsidiary protection framework for queer asylum seekers.

***Claims corroborated by a pattern across testimonies but not independently confirmed***

Specific details of individual detention experiences. The precise mechanisms of digital surveillance in each case. Family-specific dynamics of confinement and violence. Day-to-day conditions of hiding in Afghanistan and transit countries.

***Claims based on single testimony, not independently confirmed***

Ada's allegation of sexual exploitation within a shelter in Pakistan. Specific details of Idris's rape in Taliban custody as a minor. Vantace's account of his father's arrest and beating. Each of these is presented as the individual's account and is not stated as independently verified fact. Ada's allegation is included because it is serious, because it illustrates a documented category of risk for trans women in displaced settings, and because it is consistent with documented patterns of exploitation in under-regulated shelter systems. It warrants further investigation.

***Note on German-language sources***

The Germany section contains references to specific German-language sources (CORRECTIV, NOZ, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Tagesschau, BAMF, Kreuzer Leipzig, Pride.direct). The specific statistics cited – including the 2,308 admission commitments, 4,183 BAMF applications, and support infrastructure figures – originate from German-language reporting and official data. While the underlying facts are consistent with verified English-language reporting on the same issues, the precise figures were not independently re-verified for this report and are attributed to the sources cited in the original text.

***Scope and limitations***

This report does not claim to be exhaustive. Five testimonies cannot capture the full scope of what is happening to queer and trans Afghans. The sample is shaped by who was reachable, and reachability is itself a function of the inequalities this report documents: those most in danger are often least able to speak. When independent accounts, recorded separately and without coordination, describe the same mechanisms of persecution, the same failures of protection, and the same patterns of institutional indifference, they produce something more than anecdote. They produce evidence of a system.

## X. Picture attachment

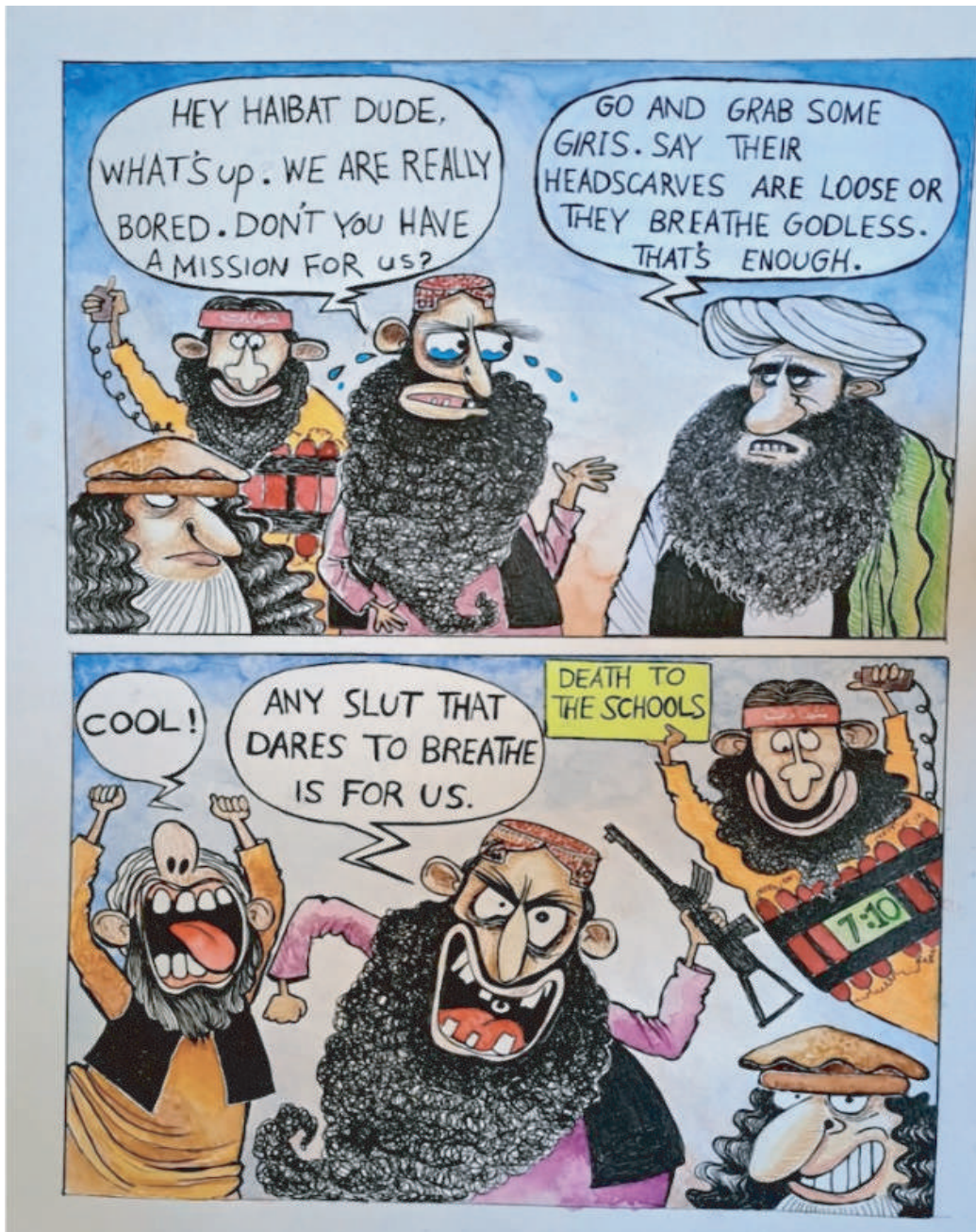
**Fatima Wojohat (USA), 2022-2025**

She began depicting faceless female figures in colourful clothing while still in Afghanistan, positioning visibility itself as a form of resistance. Her work has since gained reach among younger Afghan audiences online.

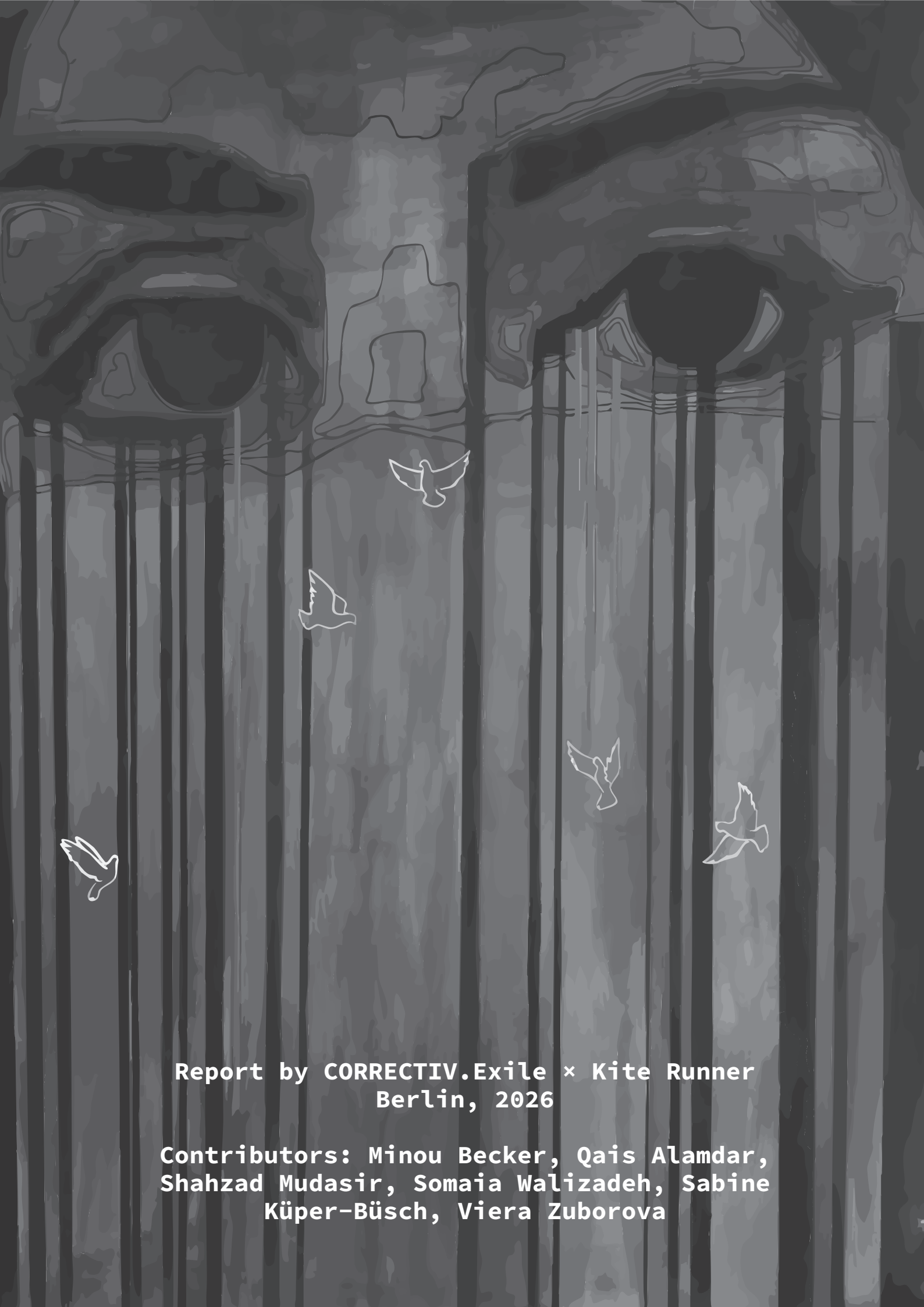


**Shira Badakhshi (Iran)**

Her work uses satire to address Taliban leadership and governance. It reflects on the consolidation of authority under Supreme Leader Haibatullah Akhundzada, whose rule is characterised by the centralisation of power and the expansion of regulatory control over women and gender expression.



Through exaggeration and ridicule, the artwork depicts a form of leadership that reinforces and legitimises increasingly restrictive norms, responding to and sustaining a system in which power is exercised through the control of bodies, behaviour and visibility.



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