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States must continue to offer protection to particularly vulnerable Afghans

Berlin (ots) -

The German Institute for Human Rights strongly recommends that all states involved in the Afghanistan operation, including Germany, provide protection to local staff and particularly vulnerable Afghans.

Using Germany as an example, the recently published publication "Responsibility for basic and human rights following the withdrawal from Afghanistan" shows the obligations to protect that result from the rights to life and physical integrity enshrined in human rights law.

The sudden withdrawal of troops in August 2021 took part after an international military mission, which lasted two decades, leaving the people of Afghanistan in the hands of the Taliban. For some of them life and limb is in risk because of their work for the international forces or because of their commitment to the goals of the international military mission.

The particular threat to local staff results from their close ties to the German Armed Forces or the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), for example, which have arisen as a result of a conduct attributable to Germany. As a result local staff and their family members have the right to enter Germany for their protection.

Protection obligations have also arisen for other particularly vulnerable Afghans who are exposed to danger to life and limb due to the Taliban's seizure of power because they have committed themselves to achieving the goals of the international mission. Their particular vulnerability is due to the fact that they have campaigned for human rights in Afghanistan - through their activities or through their publicly expressed opinions. These include judges, human rights defenders, journalists, cultural professionals, former members of the security forces and of the government, or particularly vulnerable girls and women who have taken on a public role, for example.

This also applies to the protection obligations of the other states involved in the military mission. All States including Germany must continue to offer protection to these particularly vulnerable Afghans. The protection obligations did not end with the withdrawal of the security forces from Afghanistan.

More information

Cremer, Hendrik / Hübner, Catharina (2022): Responsibility for basic and human rights following the withdrawal from Afghanistan. On Germany's duty to protect particularly vulnerable Afghans. Berlin: German Institute for Human Rights

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Contact:

Bettina Hildebrand
Spokesperson
Zimmerstraße 26/27
10969 Berlin
Tel.: +49 30 259 359-14
hildebrand@institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de

www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de

Twitter: @DIMR_Berlin

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