

PERPETUAL STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM: EXAMINING THE DYNAMICS OF AFGHANS MIGRATION TO IRAN POST-TALIBAN TAKEOVER

Jalaluddin Rizqi Mulia

*Center for the Study of Religion and Democracy, Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII),
Yogyakarta, Indonesia
jalaluddin@uii.ac.id*

Triyasa Panji Bagaskoro

*Department of International Relations, Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), Yogyakarta,
Indonesia
bysajiroworks@gmail.com*

Subulu Salam

*Department of International Relations, Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), Yogyakarta,
Indonesia
subulu.salam@students.uui.ac.id*

Submitted: September 8th, 2025; Revised: October 15th, 2025; Accepted: October 17th, 2025

Abstract

This research explores the dynamics of migration to Iran following the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2021. By accommodating Push-Pull Theory as the analytical tool, this study examines the factors that have influenced this migration pattern of Afghans to Iran post-Taliban takeover. The study employs an approach of gathering data from sources such as academic literature, government records and news articles. It reveals that a significant number of Afghans migrate to Iran driven by their need for

access to education, better economic opportunities and security reasons. This migration trend raises concerns, for both Afghanistan and Iran as it impacts stability and international migration policies. The data findings show that the number of Afghan immigrants continues to increase year over year, peaking in 2023. Moreover, this study finds that Iran, which previously pursued open-door policies to immigrants, has shifted to a more restrictive and discriminatory regulation towards Afghan migrants. In addition, concerning the multidimensional instability, this paper highlights the crucial agenda to prioritize the safety of refugees by multiple actors, particularly the state and civil society.

Keywords: Migration policy, Afghanistan, Iran, Taliban takeover.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dinamika migrasi ke Iran setelah kebangkitan Taliban di Afghanistan pada tahun 2021. Dengan menggunakan Teori Dorong-Tarik (Push-Pull Theory) sebagai alat analisis, penelitian ini mengkaji faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi pola migrasi warga Afghanistan ke Iran pasca-pengambilalihan negara oleh Taliban. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan yang mengumpulkan data dari sumber-sumber seperti literatur akademis, laporan pemerintah, dan artikel berita. Studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa sejumlah besar warga Afghanistan bermigrasi ke Iran didorong oleh kebutuhan mereka akan akses pendidikan, peluang ekonomi yang lebih baik, dan alasan keamanan. Tren migrasi ini menimbulkan kekhawatiran, baik bagi Afghanistan maupun Iran karena berdampak pada stabilitas dan kebijakan migrasi internasional. Temuan data jumlah imigran Afghanistan yang terus meningkat dari tahun ke tahun, hingga pada puncaknya di tahun 2023. Lebih lanjut, artikel ini menemukan bahwa kebijakan Iran, yang sebelumnya reseptif terhadap imigran Afghanistan, berubah sikap dengan regulasi yang lebih mengekang dan diskriminatif. Selain itu, mengingat ketidakstabilan lintas dimensi yang masih berlangsung, penulis menggarisbawahi agenda krusial untuk memprioritaskan keselamatan pengungsi bagi pelbagai aktor, utamanya negara serta masyarakat sipil.

Kata kunci: Migration policy, Afghanistan, Iran, Taliban takeover.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, Afghanistan is a dynamic country as it is often experienced by domestic conflicts. These include the civil war between monarchists and republicans, the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, the Taliban's rise to power, and the United States (US) invasion and 20-year long occupation until the Taliban returned to power in 2021 (Goepner, 2018; McGee, 2022). The resulting impact certainly then tends to be negative, with limited ability to create order by the state institutions, stagnant economic growth, and threats to the societal situation (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). In search of a more secure and decent livelihood, not a few native Afghans—from various tribes/races, who then move to live within the territory of another country. This activity is better known as migration or, to be more precise, global migration. This definition is in line with the opinion of de Haas et al. (2020) who call international migration an important dynamic of the globalization process that also changes the position of countries and societies in different and powerful ways. According to them, migration is an integral part of the process of change and development that occurs globally (de Haas et al., 2020).

Regarding the case of Afghan migrants, migration abroad has been a highlighted phenomenon of Afghan society since the conflict has been raging. Over the years, conflict and political instability in Afghanistan, plus

attacks by groups such as the Taliban and ISIS, have left civilians in a state of insecurity. Furthermore, migration is also driven by difficult economic conditions, with high unemployment rates and limited economic opportunities. Balkhi (2023), for instance, notes how Afghanistan, amid the ongoing conflict, forced more than 7 million people to migrate abroad in just 50 years. Voluntary migration—as in economically motivated, does make up a small portion of the total. However, forced migration remains the majority as a direct result of the fall of governments (Balkhi, 2023).

As a result, many of Afghanistan's neighboring countries have become destination options, including Pakistan, Türkiye, and Iran. Iran has become a significant migration destination due to its geographical and cultural proximity to Afghanistan. Specifically, Iran alone is a destination country that is estimated to receive a total of 7.6 million Afghans by 2023 based on United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data, including those migrating after August 2021 (D'Souza, 2023; Zadeh, 2023). It should be noted that this figure includes both officially registered migrants as well as the vast majority who are not well documented (VOA, 2023). According to Iran's immigrant affairs office, the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA), 2.6 million migrants have been granted documentation assistance (D'Souza, 2023). These statistics make Iran the second largest country in receiving Afghan migrants after Pakistan (Amini, 2023).

Escalation became more apparent when the US began the negotiation process with the Taliban, hoping that the intervention of foreign powers would not complicate the peace process between internal groups of interests within the country. Regarding that, in 2020, the US government and the Taliban agreed to the Doha Agreement which addressed at least four main issues, namely the withdrawal of US troops and their allies from Afghanistan, reducing the level of violence, initiating a national peace dialogue, and ensuring that Afghanistan would no longer be a sanctuary for international terrorists (Malikzada & Filseth, 2023). With US and allied forces slowly withdrawing from Afghanistan after the agreement, the Afghan government and military—under the leadership of President Ashraf Ghani, faced a major uprising that ended with the Taliban successfully taking power (Graham & Harding, 2021). As the capital Kabul fell to the group, migration rates spiked exponentially, despite the government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan—its official name under the Taliban, claiming to protect all of its citizens (BBC News, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2021a; Goldbaum, 2022; Mixed Migration Center, 2023).

Afghanistan's political, economic and social conditions affect Afghans' migration to Iran. Iran's historical and cultural connections, as well as its refugee and migration policies, play an important role in the migration dynamics. Rather than being a hegemonic relationship, the connection between Afghanistan and Iran itself focuses on protecting each other. The two countries share many similarities, including language, historical and cultural affinities, and a common enemy to some degree (Nader et al., 2014).

Iran was initially considered to have a more open refugee policy towards Afghan refugees, albeit also applying stricter restrictions at certain times. In addition, assistance from international organizations also influences migration dynamics, helping to improve the quality of life of migrants. Understanding such a backdrop is crucial to detailing and explaining the context of Afghan migration to Iran, as well as to identifying the difficulties and opportunities faced by those involved in this process (Mulyawan et al., 2018).

Addressing this issue, this paper is then initiated to understand the history and dynamics of Afghan migration to Iran, especially after the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan in 2021. In addition, the author also seeks to explore the factors behind the migration process of Afghans to Iran. Thus far, the author formulates a hypothesis that the dynamics of the Afghan migration process to Iran are considered complex, because they involve political and economic aspects that have an impact on the presence of significant challenges to Afghanistan's state-building process. Furthermore, there are a number of factors that, according to the author, push (internal) and pull (external) the Afghan migration process to Iran, including the continuation of the domestic conflict, efforts to get better wages and livelihoods, and opportunities to fill the vacant labor needs in Iran.

While previous research has explored Afghan migration patterns (Barlas, 2022; Samari et al., 2023; Abbasi & Monsutti, 2023), few studies

have comprehensively examined the post-2021 migration wave in relation to Iran's evolving domestic and regional policies. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its focus on how the Taliban's resurgence reshaped migration motivations and Iran's response mechanisms through the lens of push-pull theory. Despite recognizing that the general framework is not new, this paper's value stems from its updated contextualization and policy-centered perspective on this ongoing crisis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration research on the Afghan context has predominantly focused on regional displacement and humanitarian aspects, yet few have linked these to evolving host-country policies. As Lee's (1966) Push-Pull Theory remains central to migration studies, more recent scholarship (de Haas et al., 2020; Ozaltin et al., 2020) emphasizes how political instability and restrictive border regimes reshape migrants' agency. In Iran's case, historical affinity and religious proximity initially acted as pull factors, but shifting domestic priorities—particularly after U.S. sanctions and economic downturns—turned these into pushback mechanisms (Siavoshi, 2024). This literature gap underscores the need to revisit Afghan migration dynamics after the 2021 Taliban resurgence, when Iran's approach increasingly reflected securitization rather than solidarity.

One of the key researches that discusses the concept of migration is de Haas et al. (2020) in *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in*

the Modern World. Based on the writing of de Haas et al. (2020), some of the points that become indicators in the classification of migration types include the scope of reach (internal/international), duration (temporary/permanent), motivation (work, asylum seekers, refugees, and so on), and status (documented or not). Another categorization of migration is that of forced/involuntary and voluntary migration. The main distinction between the two lies in the availability of the option to stay in the country of origin if migration is not undertaken. This point is, thereby, a key characteristic in determining the differentiation between forced or voluntary migration, considering that migrants, specifically in this case, refugees, have agency—the individual capacity to potentially take an action, to move elsewhere (de Haas et al., 2020).

International migration itself is closely related to the process of globalization. Regarding the concept of migration, there are a number of key concepts that must be considered, including historical backgrounds, current dynamics, state policies as a form of response, frameworks in interstate relations, the role of actors (such as groups of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, networks of people smugglers, intermediaries, and so forth), to the issue of agency in migration (de Haas et al., 2020). Detailing the issue of Afghans migration to Iran, most of them can be classified as refugees; part of the forced migrants. This situation is due to the threat of persecution, intimidation, and murder that drives Afghans to leave, exacerbated by the possibility of migrants

becoming stateless due to the Taliban government which has not been much recognized by other countries (Lall, 2021; D'Souza, 2023).

In connection with the discussion of migration issues, previously quite a number of scientists developed Push-Pull Theory in describing how various factors can appear in influencing a person's interest in carrying out the migration process. Developed one of them by Lee (1966) in *A Theory of Migration*, this concept is one of the main references for this paper in analyzing the phenomenon of Afghan migration to Iran after the takeover of government by the Taliban in 2021. The decision to migrate itself considers a number of plus and minus factors, both in the country of origin and the country of destination; potentially influential challenges on the journey (including distance, physical barriers, migration laws or regulations, and so on); and personal motivations (Lee, 1966). The implementation of this study will be explained in more detail in the upcoming sections.

In the context of Afghan migration to Iran, there are a number of studies that examine the phenomenon from various perspectives. Articles with correlating themes include *Population Movements in Afghanistan: A Historical Overview, Migration Trends under the Taliban Regime, and Future Outlooks* by A. W. Barlas (2022). In his research, Barlas (2022) explains the position of Afghanistan, which is often faced with conflict, resulting in a migrant crisis that affects many countries. Due to institutional instability, the Afghan government is faced with the challenge of uncontrolled and surging migrant flows. Problems cited include those related to brain drain, shortage

of highly skilled labor, management of internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees within the country, as well as reintegration facilities for future returnees (Barlas, 2022). However, the article does not focus in detail on the factors underlying the Afghan migration process to Iran after the Taliban takeover in 2021.

In addition, there is also a research by Samari et al. (2023) entitled *Experiences of Homelessness Among Afghan Refugees in Iran: Empowerment Through a 4Es Model (Education, Employment, Emotional and Economical Support)*. In their study, the authors offer a four key elements (4Es) model to help empowerment efforts and alleviate the problem of homelessness in Afghan migrant groups in Iran, which are through providing education, employment, emotional, and economic support (Samari et al. 2023). Although it provides solutive innovations, this paper has not explored the complexity of the factors behind the process of Afghan migrants to Iran specifically, thus it is a potential to be explored further by the author.

Similarly, *From Mubajir to Āwāra: Figures of Migration and Exile Among Afghans* by K. Abbasi & A. Monsutti (2023) focuses on the evolving terminology of Afghan migration dynamics to foreign countries, starting from around the time of the Soviet invasion until 2021. The authors found many evolving terms used by Afghans—especially those of a much younger generation—to describe displacement, such as *āwāra*, *sargardān*, *dar-ba-dar*. Overall, they can generally be interpreted with similar words, such as "wandering", "vagrancy", and "homelessness". As an ethnographic

research, this paper also captures the perceptions of Afghan migrants on social media, which at first glance reflect the uncertain social, political, and economic situation in Afghanistan (Abbasi & Monsutti, 2023). While outlining people's interpretations of the narratives that drive migration, this book chapter lacks detail on the discussion of Afghan migration to Iran, its history, current dynamics and future prospects. According to the author, these research gaps have the potential to be scrutinized in greater depth.

Therefore, in understanding the factors and consequences of this event, an in-depth analysis of the motivations and backgrounds that form the basis of the will to migrate, the influence of regional forces and the impact of policies in responding to migration actions are some of the main points that will be raised by the authors.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach through a literature study in collecting relevant information to the research objectives. Numerous categories of references are cited, including books, book chapters, journal articles, news reports, and websites related to issues of Afghan refugees to Iran after Taliban's takeover. Furthermore, this study also accommodates account reports from international organizations, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This method allows for a comprehensive exploration of existing literature and

scholarly works related to the migration issues, particularly in identifying the dynamics that drive Afghans' migration motives.

The collected data is then analyzed by pointing out the historical background of Afghanistan's continuing conflict, identifying the aspects related to the push-pull factors of Afghans migration to Iran, and reviewing Iran's political responses toward the migration trends, particularly post-Taliban takeover in 2021. This study is also employing Push-Pull Theory as a theoretical framework in identifying the issues related to what internally and externally drives Afghans' migrating to Iran. The Push-Pull Theory, initially suggested by Everett S. Lee (1966), describes migration in terms of push and pull forces in the home country and destination country. *Push factors* often include unfavorable situations like economic and political instability, whereas *pull factors* include positive characteristics like potential of better living in the target country. The choice to migrate is complicated and impacted by a number of circumstances. The degree of push and pull factors could also vary according to individuals and circumstances. For example, someone experiencing extreme economic difficulties in their native country is more likely to move than someone who is dissatisfied with their work (Lee, 1966).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Understanding Afghanistan's Continuing Conflict

Afghanistan, the epicenter of geopolitics in the early 19th century, gave rise to the narrative of a "big game" between major powers. The heart of Asia is an epithet attached to Afghanistan, as it is geopolitically located at the intersection of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, indirectly making Afghanistan a country that is in an influential but volatile geopolitical location (Salahi, 2022). In this regard too, the 19th and early 20th centuries impacted Afghanistan which has been directly or indirectly involved in global power politics, a neutral territory in the competition between Soviet and British power (Salahi, 2022).

As a consequence of the competition for power and influence in Afghanistan, many civil wars often plagued Afghanistan. Internal conflicts began in 1978 between anti-communist groups, Islamic guerrillas and the communist government of Afghanistan, which was then assisted by the Soviets. The war lasted between 1979-1989, which led to the overthrow of the government in 1992. With the defeat of the government at that time, the transitional government, spearheaded by various rebel factions, established an Islamic republic. Not long after, the internal conflict resumed, triggered by President Burhanuddin Rabbani, the leader of a large mujahideen group who refused to step down in accordance with the power-sharing regulations, so that another Islamic party, led by Gulbuddin

Hekmatyar, surrounded and attacked Kabul and added the appearance of the Taliban in 1994, a mujahideen group led by Muhammad Omar, and systematically, the Taliban could control Kabul in 1996 (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023).

The following conflict, came as a new actor in Afghanistan, US launched military operations in Afghanistan in the aftermath of the rejection of demands from US to the Taliban to extradite Osama bin Laden (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023), Afghanistan's war with US lasted between 2001-2021 with the end of US leaving Afghanistan, since the influence of Al-Qaeda had declined in Afghanistan (VOA, 2021) after the conflict ended, the Taliban held back the government in Afghanistan with President Ashraf Ghani who left Afghanistan (Santoso, 2021).

Analyzing the Push-Pull Factors on the Dynamics of Afghans Migration to Iran

According to data shown by D'Souza (2023), Afghans' migration trends entering Iran are shown to have a gradual increase from 2015, with an emphasis on the huge rise after 2021, which precisely happened as the Taliban was taking over the country. This is consistent with Siavoshi's (2024) results, which highlight a rise in the number of Afghan migrants in Iran due to political instability in Afghanistan. In 2023, it was reported that over 7.6 million Afghans had relocated to Iran, a far greater number than prior years (D'Souza, 2023). 2021 constituted a watershed moment, with

migration increasing from four million people in 2020 to six million people in 2021. This is consistent with the results of Siavoshi (2024), who identified changes in Iranian immigration policy and conditions in Afghanistan as important reasons. According to Farahani et al. (2023), push factors involving instability and violence grew considerably following the Taliban's return to power, accelerating the flow of migrants to Iran.

The Number of Afghan Migrants to Iran (2015-2023)

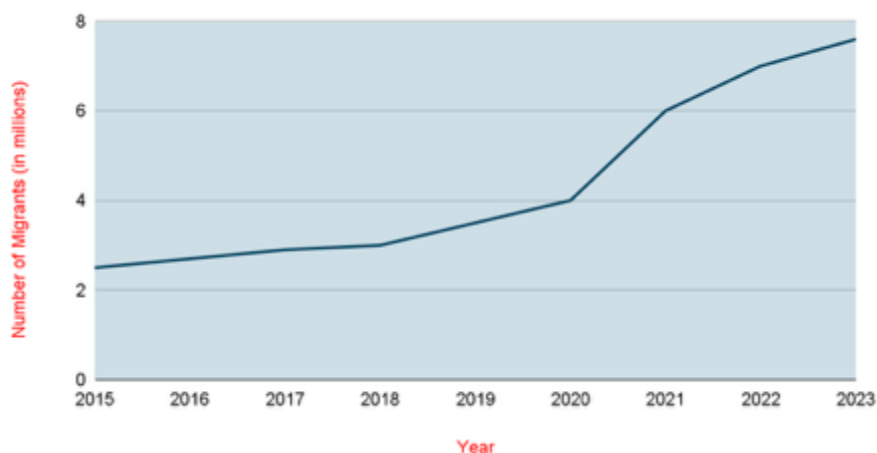


Figure 1. The number of Afghan migrants to Iran in 2015-2023 (Source: D'Souza, 2023).

The circumstances of Afghans migration to Iran are complicated as well as multifaceted. From the field of education, Modrzejewska-Leśniewska's (2020) study highlights the importance of education in the migratory trend from Afghanistan to Iran. In contrast to Afghanistan's

volatile conditions, Iran's educational scene offers a more stable and tempting alternative. This shift in educational expectations reflects a larger yearning for academic quality and stability. Migrants, mostly motivated by the need for a better education, are increasingly migrating to Iran, recognizing its more stable and regulated educational system (Modrzejewska-Leśniewska, 2020). This trend emphasizes education's crucial function as a migration magnet.

Educational restrictions under the Taliban, in which includes bans on girls' secondary and higher education, serve as powerful push factors. According to UNDP (2025), Afghan households during post-Taliban takeover are experiencing economic shock that prevent investment in education, including women's double disadvantage, which is low access to education and health care. In 2021, merely 23 percent of Afghan women over 15 were literate, among the lowest rates in the world (Kawa, 2025; UNDP, 2025). Since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, access to education for girls and women in Afghanistan has been severely curtailed. UNESCO states at minimum 1.4 million girls have been denied access to secondary education, and nearly 2.5 million school-age girls – representing around 80% of Afghan school-age girls, are deprived of right to education (Al Arabiya, 2024; Glinski, 2024; Radio Azadi, 2024). Immigration and refugee education data suggest Iran has institutional mechanisms to integrate children and students regardless of documentation, albeit children of undocumented migrants treated differently (Nateghi, 2024; Shammout & Vandecasteele, 2019).

In contrast, Iran has made important allowances for Afghan children. According to UNHCR in 2023, for instance, there were about 800,080 Afghan and Iraqi children combined enrolled in primary and secondary education in Iran, including approximately 380,000 undocumented children, along with over 60,000 Afghan studying in Iranian institutions of higher education (IFP, 2024; UNHCR, 2025). Despite the opportunities, as aforementioned, the complex situation is multifaceted. Reports have shown “administrative inefficiencies and limited awareness” towards the rights of Afghans (Zadeh, 2025). For instance, Afghan children lacking of legal status have been denied the right to formal primary education, along with volunteering NGOs are banned from giving educational activities (Afghanistan International, 2025; Naseh, 2025). Children who are considered “valid” for formal education are also facing discrimination and extortion (Amu TV, 2023). Moreover, despite over 40,000 Afghan students were admitted to Iranian universities in 2023, Afghan migrants were still heavily restricted from accessing higher education (Seddighi et al., 2024; Tehran Times, 2023). These realities illustrate the difficult situation faced by children of Afghan refugees.

Another aspect that relates as a push-pull factor is economy. Siavoshi's (2024) research, for instance, elaborates on Afghanistan's financial fragility as a driver of migration. Many Afghans, facing fragile economic situations at home, are driven to Iran in pursuit of better economic opportunities. Siavoshi (2024) argues that despite its own economic woes, Iran provides a sense of stability and better job possibilities than Afghanistan. This

economic mobility represents a fundamental search for livelihood security. The Iranian economy, while not without challenges, provides a more favorable climate for Afghans pursuing economic advancement (Siavoshi, 2024).

In Afghanistan, following the Taliban takeover, the economy has sharply deteriorated. Saenger et al. (2024), for instance, suggest the country is in ongoing deep recession, with an estimated decline of GDP by 16% from 2020 to 2022. According to UNDP (2025), over 90% of Afghan households were affected by economic contraction in 2024, despite that post-Taliban Afghanistan has also shown modest growth (The World Bank, 2024; UNDP, 2025). The fragile and uncertain economy reflects the livelihood insecurity, as poverty worsened and families lost income sources, assets and stable employment (Smith, 2024). In this context, Iran is perceived with fairly better situation offering Afghans with economic opportunities and incentivizes border crossing towards Iran (Ng, 2023).

Nevertheless, it poses a further complicated status quo: the dilemma for Iran in addressing the influx of migrants, particularly which categorized as undocumented. The dilemma is then reflected in Iran's policies of refugees securitization, complemented with plans to strengthen ties with Taliban-led Afghanistan and developing strategies to repatriate the migrants (Ayar, 2018; Motamedi, 2025; Oxford Analytica, 2024). In 2025 alone, Iran has deported nearly 1 million Afghan nationals based on various reasons (OHCHR, 2025). The migrants have contributed to Iran's domestic

economy, particularly in entrepreneurial activities and supplying the local unofficial labor market. Despite this, Afghan migrants further perceiving Iran's overall integration policies as exclusion and emotionally negative stance, especially as disparities economic access persist (Hashemi, 2024; Zandi-Navgran et al., 2023; Zandy et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the factor that has affected the migration process is protection granted by Iran. On this, Farahani et al. (2023) argues that the approaching threat posed by the Taliban and several ISIS-affiliated networks as an important inducement for migration. Despite its convoluted immigration regulations, many migrants see Iran as a safer shelter than Afghanistan. Despite the research finding that the stateless Afghans in Iran need to develop resilience strategies in facing discrimination, the aspect of protection emphasizes the critical need for safety and protection that leads people to leave their homes. Iran's perceived security contrasts sharply with the hazards present in Afghanistan; and since Iran shares borders with Afghanistan, making it a rational option for migrants seeking shelter and safety (Farahani et al., 2023).

The push element of security is deeply tied to fear of persecution. After the Taliban takeover, widespread human rights violations in Afghanistan have driven many to flee. Since 2021, the Taliban have imposed bans on secondary and university education for girls and women, along with severe restrictions on several rights, like free of mobility, employment, assembly; complemented with acts of detaining, torture to force disappearances

(Amnesty International, 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2024; Mohammadi, 2025a). Reports from international organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International document extrajudicial killings and arbitrary detentions post-2021 (Gossman, 2023; Human Rights Watch, 2021b, 2021c). Iran's geographic proximity and historical reception made minority groups in Afghanistan, including Shia Hazaras, deciding to take refuge in Iran (Heiat, 2021).

Despite this, the most recent dynamics have illustrate the revocation of Iran polices on Afghan migrants: from accepting to deportation, especially on refugees (re)classified as illegal (Hakimi, 2024; Motamedi, 2025). According to Mohammadi (2025b), the status quo is not simply a tightening of migration controls, but rather “deepening a human protection crisis”. Iranian authorities, for instance, have repatriated around 700,000 refugees from January to June in 2025, on the grounds of undocumented status, accompanied with growing anti-Afghan sentiment within Iran (Haqiqatyar & Radan, 2025; Phillips & Pakzad, 2025). The authors argue that this shift, as a particular case, showcases the general phenomenon of protection opportunities for migrants as a push-pull continuum, not a binary.

This ongoing conflict in Afghanistan itself has far-reaching consequences—not only for both countries, but also for the area as whole. For Iran, the surge of migrants poses issues in social integration, public service delivery, and immigration policy. For Afghanistan, this significant

migrant movement indicates an urgent need for political stability and economic expansion to avert more human resource loss.

Main Factors	Description
Education	Afghans relocate to Iran in pursuit of greater educational opportunities, which significantly increase post-takeover. Iran has a well-established education system, which Afghans may access at a reasonable rate.
Economic Growth	Iran has an expanding economy, and Afghans travel in quest of better economic possibilities. Despite the challenges, including discrimination, Afghans have access to a wide range of job opportunities in Iran's labor market.

Protection Opportunity	Afghans’ motives migrating to Iran in quest of safety from persecution and violence. Iran is a neighboring country with an identical society and language, and it has an extended tradition of accepting Afghan refugees.
---------------------------	---

Table 1. Major motives of Afghans migration post-Taliban takeover in 2021

(Source: authors’ analysis)

**Welcomed Then, Restrained Now? Reviewing Iran’s Policies
Responding Afghan Refugees**

Continuing conflict makes Afghanistan unsafe to live in. Conflict plays a lot in forming a person's intention to stay or leave, regardless of his ability to migrate, people feel insecure and want to avoid conflict (Ozaltin et al., 2020), migration from conflict countries mostly occurs due to coercion. This is what led Afghans to migrate, the first large-scale migration occurred during the first conflict that occurred in 1978, the communist coup and the Soviet invasion. During this period coincided with Iran's Islamic Revolution, and Afghans were eligible to receive refugee status at the Iranian border (Naseh et al., 2018). According to Crawley & Kaytaz (2022),

it is estimated that around three million Afghan refugees arrived in Iran in 1989, and then there was another wave of Afghan refugees coming to Iran in the 1990s to escape the Taliban government that was in power—creating an apparent loop of perpetual struggle for freedom.

Originally, Iran adopted an open-door immigration policy of accepting Afghans refugees, mainly Shia Muslims from the Hazara tribe. It was aimed to address Iran's declining national growth rate of 0.72% as the arrival of migrants could help maintain the required labor force in the country (D'Souza, 2023). In the process, the Iranian government has intensified restrictions and deportations (Aman, 2020; Fattahi & Debre, 2022; Times of Oman, 2023; Gul, 2023). Regarding restrictions, for example, Afghan migrants are not allowed to visit, live, and even seek work in provinces other than those designated for migrants by the Iranian government (Radio Azadi, 2023). In certain cases, deportation measures were also found to be in place for people who actually had legal documents to stay in Iran. Towards the end of 2023, Iran was even said to have deported up to 350,000 Afghan migrants, despite being criticized by many as the time currently transitioning for winter season and as the crisis had no end in sight (Gul, 2023). This, therefore, can be a clear example of how state policies can greatly affect the survival of migrants, whether they want to settle permanently or temporarily.

Moreover, geographically, Iran has close proximity to Afghanistan, with direct adjacency, it is common for Iran to become a place of migration

for Afghan refugees. The wave of Afghan refugees to Iran occurred again due to the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, this crisis made Afghans flee from Taliban rule and flee to Iran. In 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) released data on the number of refugees in the country of Iran, on its official website of 762,000, and as many as 750,000 were Afghans (UNHCR, n.d.). Although Iran is a member of the Refugees Convention 1951 and the 1967 Protocol, it has reservations to its provisions or rights (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2007) to prevent illegal refugees. More than 15,000 illegal Afghans have returned to their home countries in just four days, and about 328,000 will be deported (VOA, 2023).

Based on the 1963 Regulations, the Iranian government's reservations exist to regulate refugees, namely in the right to move, since 1993 the Iranian government restricts refugee residence by issuing temporary registration cards to Afghan refugees, these temporary registration cards limit Afghan refugees to live in specially designated settlements, rural areas, and urban areas; while in labor, the Iranian government allows foreigners to work in fields deemed appropriate (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2007). After 1995, Iran enacted measures to control refugees' access to subsidized, or free resources, such as healthcare, energy, and education (Naseh et al., 2018). Also in the 2004 Regulations, the Iranian government restricted Afghan refugees' rights to open bank accounts, and to receive, rent, and purchase property (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2007).

Despite the policies mentioned, Iran remains the main destination for Afghan refugees. This was happening due to the frequent conflicts that occur in Afghanistan, forcing them to flee. The acceptance of Afghan refugees is considered as a favor to fellow believers, this is supported by the statement of Iran's leader at the time, Khomeini, who stated that accepting Afghans was a religious obligation (Tober, 2007), and in 1992 Iran welcomed and accepted Afghans, and granted residence permits indefinitely (Nasch et al., 2018). And starting after 1992, the Iranian government began to limit the number of refugees entering, and encouraged voluntary repatriation of Afghans. Several major causes of this policy change were Iran's population explosion, war against Iraq, and economic sanctions on Iran (Siavoshi, 2024).

Migration or migratory intentions are the result of a combination of two factors, namely aspirations, and the ability to migrate (Czaika & Kis-Katos, 2008). The impact of coercion experienced by a person in a conflict or war environment plays a major role in shaping the person's decision to stay or leave (Ozaltin et al., 2020), this causal relationship explains why some people choose to stay while others leave. Under conflict environments, it is realistic to suppose that it takes a long time just for aspiration and migration especially developing countries, including Afghanistan, challenges for potential refugees such as obtaining funds to travel, access to escape routes, the possibility of breaking family ties, and gathering information about migration procedures, but returning again armed conflict forces them to migrate (Ozaltin et al., 2020).

Facilitating the repatriation and reintegration of displaced Afghans, humanitarian organizations and governments have been implementing various schemes. Prior to the Taliban takeover, for instance, the government of Iran cooperated with UNHCR towards voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees. UNHCR provides assistance packages for Afghan households who will relinquish their refugee status in Iran and return to their home country, Afghanistan (Naseh et al., 2018). Although offered with such initiatives, the assistance has been poorly managed, as most recipients have sold their land on the black market, or given it to family members or friends or left the country. The reasons for this are all the location of the allocated land, its remoteness, lack of access to livelihood activities, and poor living standards. In addition, corruption and lack of transparency are major challenges for the government, in 2011, only 14% of applicants received land plots (Naseh et al., 2018). However, in the context of the ongoing multidimensional instability, the primary concern is in prioritizing the safety of refugees, whether officially registered or the internally displaced peoples (IDPs). It is based on the principle of non-refoulement in international law which "prohibits sending back individuals who would be at risk of persecution, harm and torture" (Zada et al., 2024, p. 150). As various accords have shown hostility towards migrant issues, and major motives of migrating are involuntary, it depends on the state's policy and civil society to ensure respecting the agency of Afghan migrants.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this research analyzes the migration of Afghans to Iran after the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in 2021. The problems raised in writing this article include on how the history and dynamics of Afghan migration to Iran post-takeover and what are the factors behind the migration process of Afghans to Iran. The data shows that the number of Afghan migration to Iran has been increasing since 2015, of which a sharp spike occurred after 2021, which was conceivably caused by the political instability in Afghanistan. Beside noting the historical context of Afghanistan's continuing conflict—due to its geopolitical importance, especially after US military operations in the country, the authors find several aspects highly related to the push and pull factors that play in the dynamics of Afghans migration to Iran, which include education, economic stability and growth, along with opportunity in gaining protection. The findings also show the shifting in Iran's politics on migrants, particularly with its government's reposition from open-door immigration policies towards more restraining and discriminatory regulations. Additionally, the paper highlights the urgency of prioritizing the safety of refugees, especially the state or civil society.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The earlier draft of this paper was initially prepared for the Area Studies of Middle East course at the Department of International Relations,

Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII). The authors would like to thank the lecturer for the meaningful support and constructive feedback for the development of this article.

REFERENCES

Books

- Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). *Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity, and poverty*. Crown.
- de Haas, H., Castles, S., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world* (6th ed.). Red Globe Press.

Book Chapters

- Nader, A., Scotten, A. G., Rahmani, A. I., Stewart, R., & Mahnad, L. (2014). Iran and Afghanistan: A complicated relationship. In *Iran's influence in Afghanistan: Implications for the U.S. drawdown* (pp. 5-22). RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt1287mjf.8>

Journal Articles

- Abbasi, K., & Monsutti, A. (2023). From Muhājir to Āwāra: Figures of migration and exile among Afghans. In S. I. Rajan (Ed.), *Migration in South Asia* (pp. 187-200). IMISCOE Research Series. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-34194-6_13

- Crawley, H., & Kaytaz, E. S. (2022). Social inclusion. Between a rock and a hard place: Afghan migration to Europe. *Social Inclusion*, 10(3), 4-14. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v10i3.5234>
- Czaika, M., & Kis-Katos, K. (2009). Civil Conflict and Displacement: Village-Level Determinants of Forced Migration in Aceh. *Journal of Peace Research*, 46(3), 399-418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343309102659>
- Farahani, H., Langari, M. N. M., Eliasi, L. G., Tavako, M., & Toikko, T. (2023, April 18). "How can I trust people when they know exactly what my weakness is?" Daily life experiences and resilience strategies of stateless Afghans in Iran. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2023.2199252>
- Lee, E. S. (1966). A theory of migration. *Demography*, 3(1), 47-57. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2060063>
- Modrzejewska-Leśniewska, J. (2020). Afghan migrants in Iran in modern times. *Studia z Polityki Publicznej (Public Policy Studies)*, 4(28), 9-30. https://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.ojs-doi-10_33119_KSzPP_2020_4_1
- Mulyawan, B., Halawa, S. Y., & Winata, R. K. F. (2018). Keseimbangan Implementasi Penegakan Hukum Keimigrasian Antara Pro Justisia dengan Tindakan Administratif Keimigrasian (TAK). *Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Keimigrasian*, 1(2), 119-122. <https://doi.org/10.52617/jikk.v1i2.35>

- Naseh, M., Potocky, M., Stuart, P. H., & Pezeshk, S. (2018). Repatriation of Afghan refugees from Iran: A shelter profile study. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 3(13).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-018-0041-8>
- Ozaltin, D., Syakir, F., & Loizides, N. (2020). Why do people flee? Revisiting forced migration in post-Saddam Baghdad. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 21, 587-610.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-019-00674-z>
- Samari, D., Arancibia, H., Leihy, D. P., & Groot, S. (2023, March). Experiences of homelessness among Afghan refugees in Iran: Empowerment through a 4Es model (Education, Employment, Emotional and Economical Support). *International Journal on Homelessness*, 3(2), 31-50.
<https://doi.org/10.5206/ijoh.2022.2.13552>
- Saenger, T. R., Kapstein, E. B., & Sircar, R. (2024). Estimating the collapse of Afghanistan's economy using nightlights data. *PLOS ONE*, 19(12), e0315337. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0315337>
- Seddighi, H., Naseh, M., Rafieifar, M., & Ilea, P. (2024). Education of Afghan refugee children in Iran: A structured review of policies. *Children and Society*, 38(2), 712-726.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12620>
- Shammout, R., & Vandecasteele, O. (2019, March). Inter-sectoral cooperation for Afghan refugee education in Iran. *Forced Migration*

Review, 60. <https://www.fmreview.org/education-displacement/shammout-vandecasteele/>

Siavoshi, S. (2024, November 7). Afghans in Iran: the state and the working of immigration policies. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 51(1), 209-223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2022.2113504>

Tober, D. (2007). My body is broken like my country: Identity, nation, and repatriation among Afghan refugees in Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 40(2), 263-285. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4311893>

Zada, S. Q., Nasrullah, N., Irrynta, D. & Zada, M. Z. Q. (2024). The Fall of Afghanistan: Can the Refugee Protection Regime Handle the New Refugee Wave? *Indonesian Comparative Law Review*, 6(2), 138-155. <https://doi.org/10.18196/iclr.v6i2.22369>

Zandi-Navgran, L., Askari-Nodoushan, A., & Afrasiabi, H. (2023). Emotional experience of Afghan migrants in Iran. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 96, 101859. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2023.101859>

Zandy, L., Afrasiabi, H., Askari-Nodoushan, A., & Sadeghi, R. (2024). Afghan immigrants' perceptions of integration policies in Iran. *International Migration*, 62(3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.13290>

News Articles/Reports

Afghanistan International. (2025, September 24). *Iran Bars NGOs From Educating Afghan Children As School Year Begins*. Afghanistan International. <https://www.afintl.com/en/202509244532>

Al Arabiya. (2024, August 15). *Taliban deliberately deprive 1.4 mln Afghan girls of schooling through bans*: UNESCO. Al Arabiya English. <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2024/08/15/taliban-deliberately-deprive-1-4-mln-afghan-girls-of-schooling-through-bans-unesco>

Aman, F. (2020, May 15). *Afghan migrants: Unwanted in Iran and at home*. Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/afghan-migrants-unwanted-in-iran-and-at-home/>

Amini, S. (2023, November 10). *Where did the Afghan refugees go – and where next?* Lowy Institute. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/where-did-afghan-refugees-go-where-next>

Amnesty International. (2022, July 27). *Death in Slow Motion: Women and Girls Under Taliban Rule*. Amnesty International. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2022/07/women-and-girls-under-taliban-rule-afghanistan/>

Amu TV. (2023, December 2). *Afghan migrants children struggle for education in Iran*. Amu TV. <https://amu.tv/75008/>

Balkhi, M. (2023, September 18). *The constructive and destructive role of Afghanistan's diaspora*. Wilson Center.

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/constructive-and-destructive-role-afghanistans-diaspora>

BBC News. (2021, August 23). *Taliban berkuasa, ke mana semua pengungsi Afghanistan akan pergi?* BBC.

<https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia-58302355>

D'Souza, M. (2023, November 14). *An Iranian reversal on Afghan refugees*. The Diplomat. <https://thediplomat.com/2023/11/an-iranian-reversal-on-afghan-refugees/>

Fattahi, M., & Debre, I. (2022, May 2). *As Iran-Taliban tensions rise, Afghan migrants in tinderbox*. AP News.

<https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-business-united-states-migration-tehran-1c11473c17ae6377db0bd8b960e25be1>

Gliniski, S. (2024, July 4). *'Nothing compensates for the stolen years': The Afghan women rebuilding shattered dreams in Iran*. The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/article/2024/jul/04/afghan-women-iran-taliban-afghanistan-education>

Goepner, E. (2018, June 19). *War state, trauma state: Why Afghanistan remains stuck in conflict*. Cato Institute.

<https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/war-state-trauma-state-why-afghanistan-remains-stuck-conflict>

Goldbaum, C. (2022, December 4). *More than a million Afghans flee as economy collapses*. The New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/02/world/asia/afghanistan-migration-refugees.html>

Gossman, P. (2023, August 22). *No End to Taliban Revenge Killings in Afghanistan*. Human Rights Watch.
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/08/22/no-end-taliban-revenge-killings-afghanistan>

Graham, E., & Harding, L. (2021, August 16). *The fall of Kabul: A 20-year mission collapses in a single day*. The Guardian.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/15/the-fall-of-kabul-a-20-year-mission-collapses-in-a-single-day>

Gul, A. (2023, December 11). *Taliban: Iran departs almost 350,000 Afghans within 3 months*. VOA News. <https://www.voanews.com/a/taliban-iran-deports-almost-350-000-afghans-within-3-months/7392705.html>

Hakimi, H. (2024, December 9). *Push to deport failed Afghan asylum seekers from Europe could benefit the Taliban*. Chatham House.
<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2025/08/push-deport-failed-afghan-asylum-seekers-europe-could-benefit-taliban>

Haqiqatyar, H., & Radan, R. (2025, July 7). *'They threw us out like garbage': Iran rushes deportation of 4 million Afghans before deadline*. The Guardian.
<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/jul/07/iran-rushes-deportation-4-million-afghans-deadline-women-repression>

- Hashemi, M. (2024, December 2). *Open Borders, Closed Doors: Iran's Afghan Refugee Policy*. Gulf International Forum. <https://gulffif.org/open-borders-closed-doors-irans-afghan-refugee-policy/>
- Heiat, S. (2021, October 22). *The Hazara community in Afghanistan is stuck in the middle between Iran and the Taliban*. Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/the-hazara-community-in-afghanistan-is-stuck-in-the-middle-between-iran-and-the-taliban/>
- Human Rights Watch (2021a, September 9). *What's next for Afghans fleeing the Taliban?* Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/09/whats-next-afghans-fleeing-taliban>
- Human Rights Watch. (2021b, October 22). *Afghanistan: Taliban Forcibly Evict Minority Shia Hazaras, Former Civil Servants Targets of Collective Punishment, Land-Grabbing*. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/22/afghanistan-taliban-forcibly-evict-minority-shia>
- Human Rights Watch. (2021c, November 30). *"No Forgiveness for People Like You": Executions and Enforced Disappearances in Afghanistan under the Taliban*. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/11/30/no-forgiveness-people-you/executions-and-enforced-disappearances-afghanistan>

- Human Rights Watch. (2024, December 19). *Afghanistan: Events of 2024*. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/afghanistan>
- IFP. (2024, December 17). *Data: Over 60,000 Afghan University Students Study In Iran, Surpassing Kabul's Numbers*. Iran Front Page. <https://ifpnews.com/data-over-60000-afghan-university-students-study-in-iran-surpassing-kabuls-numbers/>
- Kawa, A. (2025, June 21). *Spiraling Poverty and Unemployment: Afghanistan's Economic Deadlock Under Taliban Rule*. Hasht-e Subh Daily. <https://8am.media/eng/spiraling-poverty-and-unemployment-afghanistans-economic-deadlock-under-taliban-rule/>
- Lall, R. R. (2021, September 17). *Despite all the international attention, Afghan refugees are not welcome*. Social Europe. <https://www.socialeurope.eu/despite-all-the-attention-afghan-refugees-are-not-welcome>
- Malikzada, N., & Filseth, T. (2023, August 18). *How the US-Taliban deal failed Afghanistan*. The Diplomat. <https://thediplomat.com/2023/08/how-the-us-taliban-deal-failed-afghanistan/>
- McGee, S. (2022, March 4). *Why the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan*. HISTORY. <https://www.history.com/news/1979-soviet-invasion-afghanistan>
- Mixed Migration Center. (2023, March). *The changing dynamics of Afghan migration after August 2021*. MMC Research Report.

<https://mixedmigration.org/resource/changing-dynamics-afghan-migration/>

Mohammadi, A. (2025a). Protection and assistance for Afghans in mixed migration: Insights on Afghans en route to Pakistan and Türkiye. *Mixed Migration Centre*.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/protection-and-assistance-afghans-mixed-migration-insights-afghans-en-route-pakistan-and-turkiye>

Mohammadi, A. (2025b, June 10). *Iran's Deportation Drive and the Growing Crisis of Forced Afghan Returns*. The Diplomat.

<https://thediplomat.com/2025/06/irans-deportation-drive-and-the-growing-crisis-of-forced-afghan-returns/>

Motamedi, M. (2025, July 22). *Inside Iran's crackdown on Afghan migrants after the war with Israel*. Al Jazeera.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/22/inside-irans-crackdown-on-afghan-migrants>

Naseh, M. (2025, January 6). One of the World's Largest Refugee Populations, Afghans Have Faced Increasing Restrictions in Iran.

Migration Policy Institute. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/afghan-refugees-iran>

Ng, K. (2023, April 18). *Afghan economic hopes threatened by Taliban*—UN.

BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-65307858>

OHCHR. (2025, July 18). Afghanistan: Returns of Afghans creating multi-layered human rights crisis. *UN Office of the High Commissioner for*

Human Rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2025/07/afghanistan-returns-afghans-creating-multi-layered-human-rights-crisis>

Oxford Analytica. (2024). *Iran's economic ties with Afghanistan will strengthen.* Expert Briefings. <https://doi.org/10.1108/OXAN-ES291381>

Phillips, A., & Pakzad, S. (2025, June 30). *More than 250,000 Afghans left Iran in June alone, UN says.* BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/clyzzxk5p38o>

Radio Azadi. (2023, December 4). *Afghans banned from 16 provinces in Iran as forced exodus continues.* Radio Free Europe. <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-afghans-banned-provinces/32713320.html>

Radio Azadi. (2024, August 15). *At Least 1.4 Million Afghan Girls Banned From Attending School Since Taliban Takeover, UNESCO Says.* Radio Free Europe. <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-girls-education-access-taliban/33079700.html>

Salahi, Z. (2022, May 28). *Afghanistan: A junction of Asia's connectivity.* National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR). <https://www.nbr.org/publication/afghanistan-a-junction-of-asias-connectivity/>

Santoso, A. (2021, August 16). *Taliban: Perang Afghanistan sudah berakhir.* ANTARA News. <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/2329166/taliban-perang-afghanistan-sudah-berakhir>

- Scharnweber, G. (2015). *What and where is the Middle East?* Middle East Policy Council Teaching the Middle East: A Resource Guide for American Educators (pp. 2-7). <https://teachmideast.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Intro.pdf>
- Smith, G. (2024, August 14). *Afghanistan Three Years after the Taliban Takeover*. International Crisis Group. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia-pacific/afghanistan/afghanistan-three-years-after-taliban-takeover>
- Tehran Times. (2023, May 2). *Over 40,000 Afghans studying in Iranian universities*. Tehran Times. <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/484260/Over-40-000-Afghans-studying-in-Iranian-universities>
- The World Bank. (2024). Afghanistan Development Update. *The World Bank*. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/126f9684f0c7ff20248c0c7bf45cccd-0310012024/original/Afghanistan-Development-Update-December-2024-Final.pdf>
- Times of Oman. (2023, November 27). *Iran initiates deportation of Afghan immigrants with valid passports, visas*. Times of Oman. <https://timesofoman.com/article/139015-iran-initiates-deportation-of-afghan-immigrants-with-valid-passports-visas>
- UNDP. (2025). *Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review: Fragile Gains, Deepening Subsistence Insecurity, 2023-2024*. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/afghanistan/publications/afghanistan-socio-economic-review>

- UNHCR. (n.d.). *UNHCR helps nearly one million refugees in Iran, mostly from Afghanistan and Iraq*. UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/ir/refugees-in-iran/>
- UNHCR. (2025). *Education*. UNHCR Iran. <https://www.unhcr.org/ir/education>
- United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. (2007, July 11). *U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants World Refugee Survey 2007 - Iran*. Refworld. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/46963883c.html>
- VOA. (2021, December 17). *Kilas balik 2021: Militer AS akhiri perang terpanjang di Afghanistan*. VOA Indonesia. <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/kilas-balik-2021-militer-as-akhiri-perang-terpanjang-di-afghanistan/6358024.html>
- VOA. (2023, November 9). *Iran semakin banyak usir warga Afghanistan*. VOA Indonesia. <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/iran-semakin-banyak-usir-warga-afghanistan/7347770.html>
- Zadeh, M. R. (2023, October 24). *The Afghan immigrant crisis in Iran and the rise of Afghanophobia*. Stimson Center. <https://www.stimson.org/2023/the-afghan-immigrant-crisis-in-iran-and-the-rise-of-afghanophobia/>
- Zadeh, M. R. (2025, January 28). *Could Iran Do More to Help Educate Afghan Refugee Children?* Stimson Center. <https://www.stimson.org/2025/could-iran-do-more-to-help-educate-afghan-refugee-children/>

Seminar Papers/Theses

Barlas, A. W. (2022, August). Population Movements in Afghanistan: A Historical Overview, Migration Trends under the Taliban Regime, and Future Outlooks. *MRPA Paper*, (114179), 1-24.
<https://mpa.ub.uni-muenchen.de/114179/>

Ayar, B. (2018). *Securitization of migration: The case of the Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran* [Bilkent University].
<http://hdl.handle.net/11693/48110>

Nateghi, M. (2024). *The Right to Education for Afghan Refugee Children in Iran: Barriers and Progress* [Master thesis, UiT Norges arktiske universitet].
<https://munin.uit.no/handle/10037/34065>

Encyclopedia Entries

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2023, October). Afghan War | History, casualties, dates, & facts. *Britannica*.
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Afghan-War>