

Pakistan Detains Hundreds of Afghans After Germany Suspends Relocation Plan

August 16, 2025

— Categories: Human Rights



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Hundreds of Afghan nationals awaiting relocation to Germany have been detained in Pakistan following Berlin's decision to temporarily suspend its resettlement programme for vulnerable Afghans. Human rights groups have raised urgent concerns that some detainees have already been deported to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, where they may face serious risks.

According to a *Politico* report dated August 14, Pakistani authorities have detained approximately 400 Afghans in recent weeks. Many of these individuals had been registered with humanitarian organisations and were in the final stages of relocation processing. Sources told *Politico* that several detainees have already crossed back into Afghanistan.

Germany's relocation programme was intended to provide safe passage for Afghans identified as being at high risk under Taliban rule. Beneficiaries included women's rights advocates, journalists, minority community members, and individuals who had worked with international organisations. With the programme now on hold, more than 2,200 people in Pakistan remain without clarity on their future.

Kabul Luftbrücke, a humanitarian group involved in the evacuation process, reported receiving dozens of accounts of deportations. The organisation estimates that around 1,700 women and children are among those affected. It warned that without an operational relocation pathway, these individuals remain vulnerable to possible reprisals and persecution if returned to Afghanistan.

The United Nations has also expressed concern over the arrests and deportations. UN officials have reminded Pakistan of its obligations under the principle of non-refoulement — a provision of international law that prohibits returning individuals to countries where they could face persecution, torture, or other serious harm. The UN urged Pakistan to halt any deportations of Afghans awaiting relocation and called on Germany to reinstate its programme without delay.

Rights advocates have echoed these appeals, stating that urgent action is necessary to prevent irreversible harm. "Immediate steps are needed to ensure the safety of those at risk," one international human rights spokesperson said.

Pakistani officials, however, maintain that their enforcement operations target undocumented migrants and individuals without valid visas or permits. Authorities argue that the arrests are part of broader measures to manage migration flows and enforce domestic immigration laws. Critics, meanwhile, say individuals registered for relocation should be exempt from such actions until their cases are resolved.

The situation highlights wider challenges in global resettlement efforts since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan in August 2021. While several countries pledged to assist

vulnerable Afghans, delays, administrative obstacles, and shifting policies have hindered progress.

Germany has cited administrative and security concerns for suspending its relocation programme. However, humanitarian organisations and international observers stress that prolonged delays could place lives at risk. As the debate continues, hundreds remain in detention in Pakistan, uncertain when or if they will be allowed to leave.

The unfolding events underscore the difficult balance between enforcing immigration laws and upholding human rights obligations, with Pakistan now at the centre of an escalating humanitarian challenge.