



**Afghanistan:  
Treatment of men showing signs of non-conformity to  
Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV)  
regulations**

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## Table of contents

Sources consulted

Findings

1. General - Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations
2. Restrictions on Afghan men under Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations
3. Penalties inflicted on men for non-compliance with the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations
4. Treatment of clean-shaven men under Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations
5. Treatment of men who do not attend prayer under Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations
6. Treatment of men with tattoos under Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations

### Acknowledgements

This report was researched and written by Rongpang Longchar. The report was edited by Serena Sorrenti.

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## Sources consulted

All (web) sources were consulted in December 2025.

### 1. International Organisations

- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)  
*The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is the leading UN entity on human rights. Its mandate includes promotion and protection of human rights, empowerment of people and assistance to governments. (See [About UN human rights](#))*
- United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)  
*The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan is tasked with providing assistance to the people of Afghanistan. It was established in 2002. Its evolving mandate is set out in a series of UN Security Council Resolutions, which can be accessed [here](#). (See [UNAMA Background](#))*

### 2. (Inter)governmental sources

- European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)  
*EUAA is an agency of the European Union mandated with supporting Member States in applying the package of EU laws that governs asylum, international protection and reception conditions, known as the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). (See [What we do](#))*
- Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
*[Ecoi.net](#)'s source description states : "The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, BZ) is the Dutch government department responsible for foreign affairs." The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs produces country of origin information reports.*
- US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)  
*USCIRF is a bipartisan legislative branch agency that is independent from the State Department, and whose mission is to advance international freedom of religion or belief, by assessing and confronting threats to this fundamental right. (See [USCIRF](#))*

### 3. (I)NGOS and think tanks

- Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN)  
*The AAN is an independent non-profit policy research and analysis organization aiming to bring together knowledge and experience of analysts and researchers to better inform policy and to increase the understanding of Afghan realities. (See [About AAN](#))*
- Afghan Witness  
*Afghan Witness is a project that aims to strengthen the Afghan information environment to provide reliable sources for international organisations, policymakers and the media. This is achieved by using open source intelligence (OSINT) to independently collect, preserve and verify information on the human rights, security and political situation in Afghanistan. (See [About](#))*

- Amnesty International  
*Amnesty International is a global non-governmental organisation focused on the promotion of human rights. (See [About Us](#))*
- Human Rights Watch (HRW)  
*Human Rights Watch is a global non-governmental organisation focusing on investigative reporting on abuses occurring around the world. (See [About Us](#))*

#### 4. Media

- Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
*Australian media outlet and leading commissioner of Australian content, it provides trusted news and information to help Australians navigate contemporary life. (See [About the ABC](#))*
- Hasht-e Subh Daily  
*The online newspaper Hasht-e Subh Daily is an independent, non-profit, and popular newspaper in Afghanistan. Founded in June 2007 by prominent Afghan journalists and human rights defenders, it focuses on citizen journalism and civic education, while maintaining its commitment to providing balanced and impartial information to the public, and to supporting democratic institutions and processes, human rights, and rule of law. (See [About Us](#))*
- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)  
*Trusted media outlet reporting on Afghanistan through its Afghan Service, RFE/RL is historically known for radio broadcasting during the Cold War, while today it seeks prioritise digital platforms and innovative censorship circumvention strategies. Its mission is to promote democratic values by providing accurate, uncensored news and open debate in countries where a free press is threatened and disinformation is pervasive. (See [About RFE/RL](#))*
- Reuters  
*Well-known British news agency empowering professionals with the insights required to make informed decisions. (See [About](#))*
- The Associated Press (AP)  
*The Associated Press is an independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting, the only global news organization that operates as an independent not-for-profit. (See [About AP](#))*
- Amu tv  
*Amu TV is a digital multimedia platform owned and operated by independent journalists, aimed at contributing to credibility, objectivity and creativity of Afghanistan's journalism. Amu is designed to serve the people of Afghanistan in both Farsi and Pashto languages by offering diverse media content to inform and educate the audience. (See [About Us](#))*
- Kabul Now  
*KabulNow is an online newspaper affiliated with the Etilaatroz. Created and based in*

*Afghanistan at first, its HQ moved to the US following the 2021 political crisis. Its coverage tries to unpack the complexity of life in South-Central Asia and the Middle East focusing on trends that shape human life, climate change, the rise in authoritarianism and the decline of free space, displacement and mobility. (See [About Us](#))*

- NDTV

*NDTV is a global news network, operating across both traditional and digital platforms and based in India. A team of dedicated journalists, analysts, and tech experts works to decode complexities, amplify voices, and deliver news that matters. (See [About the Company](#))*

- Deccan Chronicle

*Deccan Chronicle is the largest circulated English newspaper in South India (Hyderabad), bringing every day comprehensive news and analysis. (See [About Us](#))*

- openDemocracy

*openDemocracy is an independent international media platform, headquartered in London with team members across the globe. It produces high-quality journalism which challenges power, inspires change and builds leadership among groups underrepresented in the media. (See [About Us](#))*

# Findings

## 1. General - Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations

A variety of sources describe significant human rights concerns arising from the introduction of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations in Afghanistan.

- “UN human rights experts voiced profound concern today over the Taliban's recent enactment of the ‘Law on the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice,’ signalling further serious regression in human rights in Afghanistan and an escalation of the group's oppressive regime, highly reminiscent of their rule in the 1990s.

The new law deepens the Taliban's already oppressive grip on the lives of Afghans. It reinforces and expands existing discriminatory policies, such as mandatory dress codes, the requirement for women to have a male guardian (mahram), and the segregation of men and women in public spaces. [...]

(Source: OCHCR: [“New morality law affirms Taliban’s regressive agenda, experts call for concerted action”](#) 30 August 2024, last accessed: 21 December 2025)

- “Religious freedom conditions in Afghanistan continue to decline dramatically under Taliban rule. The new morality law reinforces a systematic and overt erasure of religious freedom in Afghanistan and facilitates the ongoing repression of religious minorities. Any actions deemed ‘unIslamic’ under the Taliban’s singular interpretation risks severe punishment, including arbitrary detention, torture, and capital punishment. While the morality law impacts all Afghans, it disproportionately affects religious minorities and women, eradicating their participation in public life and systematically eliminating their right to freedom of religion or belief.”

(Source: USCIRF: [“Assessing the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan”](#), August 2025, last accessed: 1 December 2025)

- “Responding to a new report by the United Nations Assistance Mission (UNAMA) in Afghanistan on the sweeping gross violations of human rights by the Taliban’s so-called de-facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (MPVPV), Zaman Sultani, regional researcher for South Asia at Amnesty International, said: ‘This report lays bare the role of the Taliban’s MPVPV in violating various human rights and fundamental freedoms in Afghanistan. Its arbitrary, inconsistent and ambiguous record of morally policing the people of Afghanistan, with an institutionalized system of discrimination that disproportionately impacts women and girls, has had a decaying effect on human rights in the country. [...]’”

(Source: Amnesty international: [“Afghanistan: New UN Report stresses urgent need for Taliban to roll back on moral policing”](#), 10 July 2024, last accessed: 21 December 2025)

- “On 21 August 2024, almost exactly three years after the Taliban’s return to power in

Afghanistan, the de facto authorities published the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV Law). A sweeping piece of legislation, the PVPV Law both reinforced existing restrictions on human rights and introduced new ones that – if fully implemented – could affect virtually all aspects of Afghans' lives under the Taliban.

[...] Since 21 August 2024, Afghan Witness recorded 130 alleged reports of human rights violations by MPVPV officials or other Taliban in the context of the Law's implementation through public sources. As an OSINT organisation, Afghan Witness has not been in a position to independently verify these claims – and it is likely that the actual number of violations are higher, given the limitations of OSINT research – but these public reports are nonetheless useful to understand trends since the Law's implementation. The majority of alleged violations affected women, including through increased restrictions on access to work and other public places, as well as through harassment, beatings and even arrests by PVPV officials for violating the Law's dress code and mahram (male chaperone) requirements. Men and boys, however, have also faced alleged gendered violations, including beatings or detention for violating provisions against 'un-Islamic' clothing or hairstyles."

(Source: Afghan Witness: "[The impact of the Taliban's Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice](#)", 2 May 2025, last accessed: 21 December 2025)

- "The announcement of the law sparked an immediate outcry from Afghan human rights defenders, in particular women, who have been at the forefront of resistance to the Taliban's policies of oppression. The law was also condemned by United Nations experts, including the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the Security Council, international non-governmental organizations and members of the international community.

103. The law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice is a deeply discriminatory and regressive law codifying and consolidating the numerous discriminatory and oppressive policies imposed by the Taliban since they seized power in 2021.

104. Current Taliban restrictions replicate many of the appalling practices that the group imposed when it was in power between 1996 and 2001. Two decades later, and despite initial claims of reform, the Taliban are slowly but surely reinstating the same draconian policies, proving that their ideology remains unchanged and unyielding. The current trajectory suggests that the situation is likely to deteriorate still further."

(Source: OCHCR: "[Study on the so-called "Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice" Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett\\*](#)", 25 February 2025, last accessed: 21 December 2025)



## 2. Restrictions on Afghan men under Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations

Multiple sources indicate that, under the Taliban's Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV), men in Afghanistan face restrictions on their appearance, dress, religious observance, and cultural expression. According to sources, methods of enforcement by the Ministry for the PVPV and its *muhtaseeb*s (Islamic officials) include monitoring, detention, and other coercive measures against men perceived to be imitating "non-Muslim" or "foreign" culture, failing to comply with beard and dress requirements, or not adhering to prescribed religious practices such as prayer and fasting. The following excerpts illustrate both the content of the PVPV regulations and examples of their implementation in practice, including arrests and public justifications by Taliban authorities.

- "The Taliban's morality police have detained four men accused of promoting foreign culture for adopting fashion inspired by the popular British series *Peaky Blinders*."

The Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice said the young men, whose videos of themselves styled as 1920s gangsters went viral in Afghanistan, had offended local culture and religion.

'A Muslim should guard Islam's red lines, should not unnecessarily copy non-Muslims, and set their ideals in accordance with Islamic values and Afghan culture,' a Taliban spokesman said in a video statement posted to social media. [...]

The Taliban's statement regarding the Thomas Shelby Group said its regime was 'saving' Afghanistan from foreign influence and that the men had now 'found the true path'.

'We have saved this country from the promotion of bad cultures through great sacrifices, and now we are defending it,' the spokesman said. [...]"

(Source: Australian Broadcasting Corporation: "[Taliban arrests young men in Afghanistan for Peaky Blinders dress-up](#)", 10 December 2025, last accessed: 11 December 2025)

- "[...] Unrelated men and women are forbidden from looking at each other, and women are commanded to cover themselves entirely in front of non-Muslim women.

Men are ordered to grow beards longer than a fist, wear loose-fitting clothes and not reveal their bodies between the navel and the knee. [...]"

(Source: NDTV: "[Everything To Know About Taliban's New 'Vice And Virtue' Law In Afghanistan](#)", 06 September 2024, last accessed: 11 December 2025)

- "Men must also dress modestly, even when playing sports or exercising. They are prohibited from shaving or trimming their beards. Men are also compelled to attend prayers as well as fast during the holy Islamic month of Ramadan.

'[Men] should not get haircuts, which violate Islamic Shari'a law,' says one of the articles in the law. 'Friendship and helping [non-Muslim] infidels and mimicking their appearance' is prohibited."

(Source: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: "[Afghanistan Slides Into 'Ever More Hellish Conditions' After New Morality Law Enacted](#)" 29 August 2024, last accessed: 11 December 2025)

- "[...] Western-style haircuts are deemed an imitation of non-Muslims and infidels, and men are required to grow their beards without trimming them shorter than a fist-length. The law also bans the wearing of neckties, which it describes as a symbol of the cross. [...]"

The Taliban's law not only imposes numerous restrictions on women but also places significant obligations on men, depriving them of sports and entertainment. The law strips men of the right to choose their clothing and appearance, while also enforcing strict limitations on their religious practices.

Article 14 of the Taliban's law instructs men not to wear short or tight clothing that reveals the 'protrusions' of their bodies. According to this article, 'A man's 'awrah' extends from his navel to his knees, including the knees.'

The law obliges men to wear clothing during sports and recreational activities that is not tight-fitting and do not reveal the shapes of their bodies. Clause 3 of the article reads: 'Men are required to wear clothing that conceals their 'awrah' during sports and recreation. The clothing must not be tight, and the shapes of their bodies should not be revealed.'

The Taliban also instruct men not to shave their beards, specifying that if they trim it, it should not be shorter than a 'fist-length.' Haircuts 'contrary to Islamic principles' are also forbidden, although the law does not clarify what constitutes a Sharia-compliant haircut.

Clause 20 of Article 22 emphasizes that 'resemblance in appearance and conduct to non-Muslims' is impermissible, and the Muhtasebs are tasked with preventing such behavior. The law also bans the use and promotion of neckties and other symbols deemed 'un-Islamic' by the Taliban."

(Source: Hasht-e Subh Daily: "[Taliban's Law for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice: Citizens Face Collective Humiliation and Dehumanization](#)", 24 August 2024, last accessed: 11 December 2025)

- "Taliban officials in Afghanistan's provinces are using a manual that imposes rules harsher than the abusive policies announced by their leaders in Kabul. [...] the 'By-Law of the Commission for Preaching and Guidance, Recruitment and Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice'. [...]"

In the manual, the Taliban discourages people from 'helping, befriending...infidels' and instructs religious leaders to advise men on growing their beards. Those who fail to pray or

fast as required by religious obligations are to be reported. It prohibits parties and listening to music audible outside a home, cinemas, gambling, and ‘inappropriate use of tape cassettes, dish antenna, computer and mobile.’”

(Source: HRW: [“Afghanistan: Taliban ‘Vice’ Handbook Abusive”](#), 29 October 2021, last accessed: 11 December 2025)

### **3. Penalties inflicted on men for non-compliance with the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations**

Reporting by Afghan research organisations, the United Nations, international human rights bodies and media outlets indicates that enforcement of the Taliban’s Law on the PVPV has had concrete and coercive impacts on the daily lives of men and their families. Sources, some of which include testimonies from affected individuals, describe punishment including detentions, flogging, job loss, threats of detention or imprisonment, restrictions on family life and movement, and fear of physical punishment linked to non-compliance with dress, grooming, prayer, and conduct requirements.

- “[...] The morality ministry, formally called the Ministry for the Prevention of Vice and Propagation of Virtue, has already been enforcing similar morality requirements and says it has detained thousands of people for violations. It was not immediately clear whether publication of the rules would lead to stronger enforcement.

Penalties for violations included ‘advice, warnings of divine punishment, verbal threats, confiscation of property, detention for one hour to three days in public jails, and any other punishment deemed appropriate,’ the Justice Ministry added.

If such measures failed to correct an individual's behaviour they would be referred to court for further action, it said.

‘A lot of these rules were in place already but less formally and now they are being formalised I think this is a sign of what we’ve been seeing over the last three years which is a steady and gradual escalation of the crackdown,’ said Heather Barr, Associate Director of Human Rights Watch's Women's Rights Division.”

(Source: Reuters: [“Taliban codify morality laws requiring Afghan women to cover faces, men to grow beards”](#), 23 August 2025, last accessed: 12 December 2025)

- “One of the men we heard from, Parvez, the school teacher in Ghazni, when asked about the impact of the law, said restrictions on men were harsh, but far harsher for women. He described how his wife could no longer ‘go out freely due to fear of the enforcers.’ A teacher herself, she is now unemployed because of Taliban restrictions and ‘can’t go out without a mahram and can’t dress how she wants to, but must wear black clothes, a niqab and even gloves: “This is what we don’t like,” he said. “We don’t want others to interfere in personal issues. We’re Muslim, so we know what sharia asks us to do, but the Taliban overdo it. They’re excessive [efrat mekonand].” Parvez had himself lost one job over beard and clothing violations, but managed to get another. He was still ‘very young,’ he said, and liked to wear

the latest fashions, but after being stopped twice, the second time with the threat of prison for trimming his beard a little, he now conformed to the demands of amr bil-maruf. In Kandahar, businessman Ahmad Khan said he himself was not bothered by amr bil-maruf. His age, as well as his beard and clothes – similar to the enforcers’ – gave him some protection and in the upmarket part of Kandahar, ‘a civilised township,’ where he lives, the enforcers were respectful. However, he said:

*This law has robbed us of our freedom [as a family] to go to restaurants and eat a meal, or to an ice cream parlour. Women cannot go to restaurants even with a mahram. I can’t take my female family members with me on a picnic. I can’t even travel with my wife in my own car with my heart at ease.*

He said the enforcers do stop and question the young men in his family if they are out driving with female family members: ‘My sons and I no longer go out with our wives unless it’s necessary,’ he said. ‘We’re afraid they’ll beat us or threaten us in front of our wives.’ [...]

(Source: Afghanistan Analysis Network: [“A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law”](#), 21 August 2025, last accessed: 11 December 2025)

- “In the lead-up to Eid al-Adha, Taliban morality enforcers raided barbershops in Logar, detaining young men whose hair was styled in what Taliban deemed ‘un-Islamic’ fashion or whose beards had been shaved. Barbershops offering such services were forcibly closed, and some barbers were also detained, sources added.

‘The Taliban morality enforcers are patrolling city streets and sealing any barbershop they believe does not comply with their interpretation of Islamic standards,’ one source in Logar said.

Eyewitnesses reported that during the raids, Taliban removed young men from salons and transported them to undisclosed locations. Barbershops that offered modern haircuts or clean-shaven styles were said to be primary targets.

The enforcement has not been limited to Logar. Sources in Kabul and several other provinces confirmed that similar crackdowns have taken place in recent days, with young men being detained and barbershops shuttered under orders from Taliban religious enforcers.

Taliban have not publicly commented on the latest reports, but they have previously imposed restrictions on male grooming practices and styles it views as contrary to its conservative interpretation of Islamic law.

The widening scope of these actions has heightened public concern, with many Afghans expressing fear over the increasing intrusion of Taliban authorities into daily life.”

(Source: Amu Tv: [“Taliban detain young men in Kabul, Logar over hairstyles: Sources”](#), 6 June 2025, last accessed: 11 December 2025)

- “The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan on Wednesday condemned the public flogging of more than 60 people, including more than a dozen women, by the Taliban in northern Sari Pul province.

At least 63 people were lashed on Tuesday by Afghanistan’s de facto authorities, UNAMA said in a statement on social platform X. The U.N. office condemned corporal punishment and called for respect for international human rights obligations.

Taliban’s supreme court in a statement confirmed the public flogging of 63 people including 14 women who had been accused of crimes including sodomy, theft and immoral relations. They were flogged at a sports stadium.

The Taliban, despite initial promises of a more moderate rule, began carrying out severe punishments in public — executions, floggings and stonings — shortly after coming to power again in 2021. The punishments are similar to those during the Taliban’s previous rule in the late 1990s.”

(Source: The Associated Press (AP): [“The Taliban publicly flogs 63 people including women accused of crimes. The UN condemns it”](#), 5 June 2025, last accessed: 28 November 2025)

- “The Taliban morality police in Afghanistan have detained men and their barbers over hairstyles and others for missing prayers at mosques during the holy month of Ramadan, a U.N. report said Thursday, six months after laws regulating people’s conduct came into effect.

The Vice and Virtue Ministry published laws last August covering many aspects of everyday life in Afghanistan, including public transport, music, shaving and celebrations. Most notably, the ministry issued a ban on women’s voices and bare faces in public. [...]

Thursday’s report, from the U.N. mission in Afghanistan, said in the first 6 months of the laws’ implementation, over half of detentions made under it concerned ‘either men not having the compliant beard length or hairstyle, or barbers providing non-compliant beard trimming or haircuts.’”

(Source: The Associated Press (AP): [“Taliban morality enforcers arrest men for having the wrong hairstyle or skipping mosque, UN says”](#), 10 April 2025, last accessed: 11 December 2025)

- “75. The law grants muhtasibs broad and arbitrary powers to detain and punish individuals accused of infractions of its provisions, without any requirement for evidence or due process, in flagrant violation of international human rights law and standards. In conferring such broad and discretionary powers, the law enables muhtasibs to simultaneously function as law enforcement officers, judges, and prison wardens, with very few limitations or checks on their power.

76. Muhtasibs can administer Ta'zir punishments in accordance with the PVPV law; punishment for acts prohibited in the law which constitute Hudūd crimes must be administered by the courts. Muhtasibs follow a seven-step process for violations, which begins with giving advice, warnings, and verbal reprimands, then destruction of property, and extends to imprisonment of up to three days. The law also grants muhtasibs the power to mete out punishments which they deem 'appropriate' provided it does not fall under the jurisdiction of the courts. This is especially problematic as it is highly subjective, granting muhtasibs excessive powers to determine what constitutes an 'appropriate' punishment. Nowhere in the law are there safeguards against torture or other-ill-treatment, nor are accused given the rights to legal recourse or due process. It is important to note that muhtasibs are not just authorised to monitor and discipline the general public, but also other de facto ministries and officials.

77. While Chief and the Heads of the de facto PVPV Ministry have broad powers and can apply all seven forms of punishment, local de facto officials must consult with their superiors for punishments involving destruction of property, imprisonment, or other 'appropriate' measures. Individuals who commit repeated violations are to be referred to the relevant court. Muhtasibs are also tasked with ensuring detainees basic needs are met and that they are released after their sentence is completed."

(Source: OCHCR: ["Study on the so-called "Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice" Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett"](#), 25 February 2025, last accessed: 12 December 2025)

- "[...] A 23-year-old Kabul man said he was stopped three times. 'They asked me why I didn't have a beard. I was scared and promised them I would grow one,' he told AFP."

(Source: NDTV: ["Everything To Know About Taliban's New "Vice And Virtue" Law In Afghanistan"](#), 06 September 2024, last accessed: 11 December 2025)

#### **4. Treatment of clean-shaven men under Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations**

Multiple sources report that enforcement of the Taliban's *Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV)* has led to the punishment of men for non-compliance with beard, hairstyle, and appearance requirements. The excerpts below document both the formal penalties authorised under the law and the coercive practices used in its implementation across Afghanistan.

- "[...] De facto authorities have also detained individuals for failing to comply with the dress code mandate outlined in the morality law. In December 2024, the MPVPV arrested two journalists, one male and one female, for trimming his beard and not covering her head. In July, enforcers from the MPVPV detained at least 50 men in southern Kandahar for reportedly shaving their beards. While some were immediately released, others spent days in custody.

[...] Afghan men are therefore forced to comply with the morality law or risk beatings, detention, or other forms of punishment for failing to enforce the edict imposed on their female relatives.”

(Source: USCIRF: “[Assessing the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan](#)”, August 2025, last accessed: 17 November 2025)

- “The Taliban's morality ministry dismissed more than 280 members of the security force for failure to grow a beard and detained more than 13,000 people in Afghanistan for ‘immoral acts’ in the past year, officials said on Tuesday.

The Ministry for the Prevention of Vice and Propagation of Virtue said in its annual operations update that around half of those detained had been let go after 24 hours. It did not break down the type of the alleged offences or gender of the detainees. [...]”

(Source: Reuters: “[Taliban morality police dismiss over 280 men without beards from security forces](#)” 20 August 2024, last accessed: 11 December 2025)

- “Taliban morality police are pressuring shopkeepers in Herat to grow long beards, in accordance with their strict interpretation of the Sharia law, local sources said on Friday. Sources told Amu TV that Taliban morality police have recently entered shops in central Herat, threatening those with short beards.

According to the sources, the enforcers took photos of the shopkeepers and warned they would return in a month to compare their facial hair growth to the original images.

One source, who requested anonymity, said Taliban officials stated that if a man’s beard does not reach the length of a fist, he would be detained.

Residents of Herat say the move is part of the Taliban’s increasing surveillance over personal appearance and private life, which has intensified in recent weeks.

The Taliban leader recently at a gathering in Kandahar this week claimed that the people of Afghanistan had become unfamiliar with ‘Islamic Sharia’ during the 20 years of the previous government’s rule.”

(Source: Amu Tv: “[Sources: Taliban forcing Herat shopkeepers to grow long beards](#)”, 8 August 2025, last accessed: 11 November 2025)

- “Taliban Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has directed clerics to encourage men to adopt what he described as the ‘traditions of the Prophet,’ including growing beards and wearing turbans, in a renewed push to impose the group’s hardline interpretation of Islamic values across the country.

The directive was issued during a meeting on August 7, with religious scholars and mosque preachers in Kandahar, the Taliban’s ideological heartland, according to a statement by the group’s deputy spokesperson, Hamdullah Fitrat.



[...] Akhundzada described the Islamic principle of promoting virtue and preventing vice as a 'sacred duty' in an Islamic society. He warned that communities which fail to uphold these values risk falling into corruption and divine punishment. Under a Taliban decree personally signed by Akhundzada, shaving or trimming beards is banned and considered a punishable offense. Since regaining power in 2021, Taliban enforcers have detained young men in various cities for facial hair violations and have shut down barbershops accused of trimming customers' beards.

Barbers across the country have been ordered not to offer beard grooming services. Several have been arrested, and their businesses temporarily closed, for allegedly violating the directive. [...]"

(Source: Kabul Now: "[Taliban Leader Orders Clerics to Promote Beards and Turbans as Islamic Obligations](#)", 7 August 2025, last Accessed: 18 November 2025)

- "Several residents of Kabul have expressed concern over increasing restrictions and the closure of barbershops in the capital. They criticize the Taliban's actions, stating that without a long beard, their complaints and requests are not taken seriously in government institutions and offices. Residents of the capital also emphasize that they face verbal and gender-based violence due to shaving their beards or not having one. They report that Taliban fighters, under the pretext of beard-shaving, touch their hair and faces. According to Kabul residents, the continuation of this situation has negatively impacted not only their businesses but also the mental health of individuals.

Some residents of the capital express concern that when visiting government institutions, if their beard is not long or they do not wear traditional attire like shalwar kameez, their requests and complaints are ignored.

This Kabul resident adds: 'Once, in the Kotal-e Khairkhana area, my vehicle collided with another. I wasn't at fault, but the Taliban traffic officials, instead of addressing the guilty driver, focused on my appearance and said, 'Look at your mustache, it's too much, you've become like the communists, the infidels.'"

Bizhan continues: 'Another time, in the Microrayan intersection, a Taliban member stopped my vehicle, touched my face, and asked where I had shaved my beard and why I had done so. They also asked why my mustache was so prominent.'

[...]The Taliban have also issued a directive requiring government employees to grow beards and wear Kandahari caps or turbans. According to this order, failure to comply with these regulations will result in dismissal or being marked absent.

Previously, the Hasht-e Subh Daily obtained documents showing that Taliban authorities in Balkh had extracted written commitments from government employees to grow beards, wear Kandahari caps, and follow Hibatullah Akhundzada's orders. The documents stated that employees pledged to prepare their appearance per 'Sharia Law' and Akhundzada's



commands.

The Associated Press (AP) reported that in the first six months of this year, more than half of the detentions in Afghanistan were due to men's hairstyles and beard lengths, with barbershops being targeted.

Residents complain that Taliban members touch their faces under the pretext of checking beards, while previous reports have highlighted multiple instances of 'Bacha Bazi' (child sexual exploitation) within the Taliban's ranks."

(Source: Hasht-e Subh Daily: "[Taliban Mandates Beards and Kandahari Caps, Putting Kabul's Barbershops in Peril](#)", 17 July 2025, last accessed: 25 November 2025)

- "UNAMA observed that in the first six months of implementation of the PVPV law, 25 over half of the PVPV law-related arbitrary detentions concerned men's appearance—either men not having the compliant beard length or hairstyle, or barbers providing non-compliant beard trimming or haircut."

(Source: UNAMA: "[Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan](#)", April 2025, last accessed: 1 December 2025)

## **5. Treatment of men who do not attend prayer under Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations**

The excerpts below illustrate that the Taliban have made congregational prayer mandatory, with government employees and civilians punished for missing prayers. According to sources, under PVPV law, individuals have been subject to fines, warnings, detention, and physical mistreatment for failure to attend prayer. Sources describe the authorities using mosque monitoring, intimidation, patrols, surveillance, and imam-led punishment to ensure compliance.

- "Afghan government employees must attend mosque five times a day or face punishment, Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada said Thursday in his latest edict enforcing an austere interpretation of Islam.

Since the 2021 Taliban takeover Akhundzada has overseen sweeping restrictions on society – shutting many women and girls out of education, ordering male chaperones for females and effectively banning music.

'The officials of the ministries and institutions of the (Taliban government) are obliged by Sharia to pray in congregation at their fixed times,' said the order signed by Akhundzada.

It added that employees who miss a prayer 'without a reasonable excuse' should receive a warning, and if they repeat the transgression 'the relevant official is obliged to appropriately punish him'.

[...] A United Nations report last month said ‘restrictive measures to regulate activities of individuals in both public and private spheres contribute to a climate of fear and intimidation among segments of the population’.”

(Source: NDTV: “[Attend Mosque Or Be Punished, Taliban Chief Orders Government Workers](#)”, 8 August 2024, last accessed: 16 November 2025)

- “The law firmly regulates the religious practices of Muslims. Article 6 declares that the law is based on Hanafi jurisprudence and applies to ‘all offices, public places and people residing in the territory of Afghanistan.’ It further mandates religious practices for Muslims and prohibits the practice of other religions or beliefs that are perceived as different from the Taliban’s singular interpretation, including Shi’a, Ahmadiyya, or Sufi Muslims. The law also limits free discussion about religion by prohibiting the publication of content deemed contradictory to the Taliban’s interpretation of Islam. The law further punishes individuals for failing to pray, delaying prayers, or not praying in congregation.

[...] In March 2025, enforcers were reportedly conducting nighttime patrols in Farah Province, detaining individuals and forcing them to perform prayers.

[...] In September 2024, the Taliban’s Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs reportedly issued a letter to imams across the country, instructing them to enforce the law and emphasize its importance in sermons. The Taliban has also established a more elaborate monitoring system in Kabul with the ability to track individuals using facial recognition. [...]

Religious freedom conditions in Afghanistan continue to decline dramatically under Taliban rule. The new morality law reinforces a systematic and overt erasure of religious freedom in Afghanistan and facilitates the ongoing repression of religious minorities. Any actions deemed ‘unIslamic’ under the Taliban’s singular interpretation risks severe punishment, including arbitrary detention, torture, and capital punishment. While the morality law impacts all Afghans, it disproportionately affects religious minorities and women, eradicating their participation in public life and systematically eliminating their right to FoRB.”

(Source: USCIRF: “[Assessing the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan](#)”, August 2025, last accessed: 17 November 2025)

- “Eight local sources confirmed to Amu that the Taliban’s Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice has ordered mosque leaders to monitor attendance and impose a fine of 100 afghanis — roughly \$1.15 — on individuals who miss daily prayers. The move is part of a broader expansion of religious and social enforcement across the city.

Residents said that Taliban patrols have stepped up monitoring of public spaces, marketplaces and transportation hubs, inspecting both men and women for adherence to dress codes and prayer obligations.

[...] The enforcement has extended to men. In several neighborhoods, Taliban members have reportedly distributed what locals are calling ‘mosque attendance lists’ — used to track who

participates in congregational prayers. One doctor said he is being fined daily despite his demanding work hours.

‘I attend mosque when I can,’ he said. ‘But if I miss evening or night prayers due to work, I’m fined 100 afghanis each time. The mosque’s congregation knows I’m a regular, but it doesn’t matter. There’s no one to appeal to.’

The policy has drawn criticism from rights activists, who say the Taliban’s implementation of a formal morality law last year has given enforcers broader latitude to impose religious norms — especially on women and girls.

Although Taliban officials continue to reject accusations of harsh enforcement, reports from Herat suggest a growing presence of morality patrols and escalating restrictions on daily life.”

(Source: Amu Tv: [“Taliban impose fines in Herat for men who miss congregational prayers: Sources”](#) 30 May 2025, last accessed: 21 December 2025)

- “The Taliban have been reported to threaten individuals to adhere to the expected religious practices. For example, as of January 2022, the Taliban have reportedly announced a requirement for all men to attend congregational prayers at mosques in parts of Kabul and Takhar provinces. In Herat City, the de facto security forces were reported to actively patrol the streets in some areas, looking for people not attending prayers during Ramadan and ‘assaulting bystanders, shopkeepers, medicine vendors’ [...]”

(Source: EUAA: [“Individuals perceived to have transgressed religious, moral and/or societal norms”](#), May 2024, last accessed: 21 December 2025)

- “The report said that the morality police regularly detained people arbitrarily ‘without due process and legal protections.’ During the holy fasting month of Ramadan, men’s attendance at mandated congregational prayers was closely monitored, leading at times to arbitrary detention of those who didn’t show up, the report added.”

(Source: Deccan Chronicle: [“Taliban morality enforcers arrest men for having the wrong hairstyle or skipping mosque, UN says”](#) 10 April 2025, last accessed: 22 December 2025)

- “Other common alleged reasons for detentions are the failure to attend congregational prayer and conducting activities prohibited by the PVPV law, such as playing music, taking photos or making videos. In most cases observed, individuals were detained at a de facto DPVPV facility, which include de facto DPVPV offices and containers (used as an extension of the office premises) for between several hours to three days. In some instances, individuals were held at de facto police lockups and prison facilities.

In some cases, individuals who failed to attend mandated prayers in the mosques and those who continued to operate their businesses during prayer times were arbitrarily detained by inspectors, with some ill-treated.”

(Source: UNAMA: "[Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan](#)", April 2025, last accessed: 1 December 2025)

## **6. Treatment of men with tattoos under Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations**

No information was found among the sources consulted and within the time constraints of producing this research relating to the treatment of men with tattoos, including prosecutions and official sanctions, under the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice regulations, which were introduced in 2024.

Available sources indicate that, while tattooing has existed among some Afghan groups, permanent tattoos are generally regarded as "un-Islamic" and socially sensitive. Sources published between 2017 and 2024 report that Afghans with Western-style tattoos conceal them in public due to fear of societal hostility, or Taliban scrutiny. The information found does not refer specifically to Afghan men with tattoos, but discusses people with tattoos in general, with some sources also referring specifically to women with tattoos. Given limited information in the public domain, these sources have been included as they provide some indication about how tattoos are perceived in Afghan society.

- "According to one source, having a tattoo is considered un-Islamic. Individuals with a tattoo were not allowed to participate in religious ceremonies and could not be buried as a Muslim. The only exception is a tattooed dot that Pashtun women sometimes have on their foreheads. [...] According to a source, in practice people with a tattoo often make sure that it is not visible when they are in Afghanistan in order to avoid problems. [...]"

(Source: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "[General country of origin information report Afghanistan](#)", June 2023, last accessed: 21 January 2026)

- "She showed me the tattoos on her arm, which she had covered with a tight black sleeve. 'I had this tattoo inked two years ago when I had no idea the Taliban might wrest control again. I am now afraid they would whip me for that,' she said. 'Do you think my appearance is acceptable by the Taliban?' I asked her. 'I have no idea. I'm just like you. I was three years old when the Taliban fell,' she answered."

(Source: Open Democracy: "[I travelled around Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. This is what I saw](#)", 24 November 2021, last accessed: 1 December 2025)

- "According to sources, Afghan people have a tradition of tattooing among some groups although permanent tattooing is 'generally seen as un-Islamic' and are forbidden in Islamic law, according to a report on the topic by Lifos, Sweden's Country of Origin Information service in the Swedish Migration Agency. Lifos found that Afghan people with Western style tattoos covered their tattoos in public for fear of societal or insurgent reactions, despite their growing popularity among urban youth. Information on prosecutions or public reactions to Afghans with Western style tattoos or tattooed Christian symbols could not be found within

time constraints.”

(EASO (now called EUAA): “[Country of Origin Information Report](#)”, December 2017, last accessed: 21 December 2025)



## About Asylos

Asylos is a network of volunteers providing research assistance to lawyers who represent refugees. Asylos is an international network of over 60 volunteers in 25 countries who provide high-quality Country of Origin Information research for people claiming asylum and their representatives around the world.

Asylos provides services free of charge to lawyers and NGO caseworkers around the world who are assisting asylum seekers through their legal procedures. We produce case-based and broader Country of Origin Information (COI) research reports, used to support a variety of protection-based claims in court.

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## About this Report

This document has been produced by Asylos in response to specific questions posed by an asylum lawyer working on a claim. It is based on publicly accessible written sources as well as consultations with relevant experts. All translations provided in the research report are written by Asylos researchers, unless specified otherwise. This document does not pretend to be exhaustive. Asylum lawyers may use the information in this report to support their clients in asylum and international protection procedures, however neither this document nor excerpts of it may be published online without authorisation from Asylos.

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