



Submission by the Federation of Hazara Councils, Australia

In Response to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Consultation on the
Autonomous Sanctions Amendment (Afghanistan) Regulations 2025

Date: 12 October 2025

To: Sanctions Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

From: Federation of Hazara Councils, Australia


Website: hazaracouncil.org.au

Cover Letter

12 October 2025

Sanctions Section
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Canberra, ACT

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Federation of Hazara Councils, Australia (the Federation) is delighted to provide its formal submission regarding the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Consultation on the *Autonomous Sanctions Amendment (Afghanistan) Regulations 2025*.

We commend the Australian Government's commitment to the promotion of human rights and justice in this amendment by recognising the violence against women and girls, minority groups, and the public in general as sanctionable acts. The Federation fully supports the recognition of these groups and provides evidence-informed recommendations for the purposes of effective implementation.

The enclosed submission outlines the ongoing persecution faced by Afghanistan's Hazara community, the systematic exclusion of women, and the collapse of governance under the Taliban regime. It also details the Federation's advocacy record, both internationally and within Australia, to affirm our credibility as a policy and civil society partner.

We thank DFAT for its continued engagement and invite further consultation to strengthen the sanctions framework and its humanitarian safeguards.

Sincerely,
Federation of Hazara Councils, Australia

Submission by the Federation of Hazara Councils, Australia

The Federation of Hazara Councils, Australia (the Federation) is delighted to be in a position to make this submission to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) regarding the *Autonomous Sanctions Amendment (Afghanistan) Regulations 2025*.

We fully support the Australian Government's initiative to strengthen the sanctions regime to expressly include as sanctionable conduct:

- The persecution of women and girls;
- Persecution of minority groups;
- General persecution of people; and
- Disrupting good governance or the rule of law.

This submission has been made by the Federation, in partnership with over 40 state-based associations that are proud partners of the Federation.

Together, we stand for justice, accountability, and human rights for all people of Afghanistan.

This briefing draws attention to the ongoing abuse of human rights under Taliban leadership, focusing on the persecution of the Hazara people, systematic exclusion of women, and dismantling of lawful governance. It also shows the Federation's credibility and readiness to support DFAT in ensuring these reforms are implemented effectively.

1. Background: The Taliban's Systematic Repression

The return to power of the Taliban in August 2021 marked a total collapse of constitutional government and respect for human rights in Afghanistan. The regime's behaviour has been marked by systematic persecution of women, ethnic minorities, civil society, and the media.

True international reports — e.g., those of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA, 2024), Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch — determine that Taliban conduct exceeds the thresholds for crimes against humanity and, in some instances, genocide or ethnic cleansing.

2. Oppression of Women and Girls (Regulation 6(a))

Under the Taliban regime:

- Girls are banned from attending secondary schools and universities, denying education to millions.
- The denial of public service, NGO jobs, and most areas of employment takes away economic independence.

- Strict control of travel, dress, and obligatory male escort instates gender-based coercion.
- Medical treatment has become much less accessible to women, worsening maternal and reproductive health problems.

This institutionalised gender oppression is a blatant violation under Regulation 6(a) of the draft policy.

(See Amnesty International, “Death in Slow Motion: Women under the Taliban,” 2023.)

3. Minority Group Oppression (Regulation 6(b))

The Taliban's discriminatory policies victimise Afghanistan's ethnic and religious minorities, particularly the Hazara, a Shia-Muslim, Persian-speaking people.

Under the Taliban:

- Hazara-majority areas (such as Dasht-e-Barchi, Kaaj Education Centre, Balkhab, and Daikundi) have been bombarded and massacred repeatedly.
- Entire Hazara communities have been forcibly resettled, their properties seized and distributed to Taliban loyalists.
- Hazara cultural, religious, and educational institutions have been attacked and destroyed or driven underground.

These actions are targeted persecution and fall under Regulation 6(b) sanctionable criteria.

(See UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Afghanistan, Report to the Human Rights Council, 2024.)

4. General Oppression of the People (Regulation 6(c))

Taliban repression extends to all Afghan people:

- Reporters, activists, and human rights defenders have been arrested, tortured, or forcibly disappeared.
- Political participation has been banned; independent media silenced.
- Freedoms of expression, assembly, and association have been exterminated.

These actions constitute “general oppression,” serving the aim of Regulation 6(c).

5. Destabilising Good Governance and the Rule of Law (Regulation 6(d))

The Taliban regime is beyond constitutional legitimacy and institutional responsibility:

- The Afghan constitution, parliament, and judiciary have been dismantled.
- Revenues are concentrated in opaque networks affiliated with Taliban groups.
- Civil society institutions are disassembled or co-opted, eradicating accountability.

This deterioration of legitimate governance falls under the conduct prohibited under Regulation 6(d).

6. The Federation: International and Domestic Advocacy

The Federation is a national representative organisation for Hazara councils and organisations across Australia, advancing human rights, community support, and policy inclusion.

International Engagement

- United Nations, New York: The Federation members have participated in UN human rights forums, highlighting Hazara persecution internationally.
- UN Human Rights Council, Geneva: the Federation has contributed to side events and forums, calling for accountability and international oversight.
- UN Regional Bureau, Bangkok: the Federation has participated in discussions on refugee protection and Hazara vulnerability in transit areas.

Australian Domestic Advocacy

- Credible submissions to the Australian government and parliamentary reports on Afghanistan, refugees, and multicultural inclusion.
- Collaboration with DFAT, the Australian Human Rights Commission, and multicultural policy groups.
- Organisation of national awareness forums, including *Your Voice, Our Mission: Hazara Council Forum Victoria*.
- Campaign for a National Community Relations Commission to increase multicultural representation and governance.

The Federation's campaign enjoys both national standing and international presence, which makes it a valuable ally for DFAT in its sanctions program.

7. Recommendations

Based on evidence and experience, the Federation recommends:

Recommendation 1: Apply Regulation Six Fully and Openly

Enforce rigorous, evidence-based criteria for putting individuals and entities engaging in sanctionable behaviour under sanctions, with strong open reporting.

Recommendation 2: Sanction Perpetrators Directly

Sanction Taliban leadership and organisations such as the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, and local commanders engaged in systemised persecution.

Recommendation 3: Acknowledge Hazara Persecution

Formally recognise the Taliban's deliberate violence against the Hazara as crimes against humanity and potential genocide, aligned with UN and NGO reports.

Recommendation 4: Institutionalise Civil Society Engagement

Establish a regular consultation mechanism enabling DFAT to coordinate with diaspora organisations (e.g., the Federation) for evidence-sharing and monitoring.

Recommendation 5: Integrate Humanitarian Safeguards

Guarantee that sanctions focus on perpetrators, not the Afghan people, and maintain humanitarian exemptions for programs supporting women, children, and minorities.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen International Coordination

Align Australia's sanctions regime with key allies (UK, US, EU, and Canada) to leverage maximum international impact and discourage evasion.

Recommendation 7: Monitor, Report, and Review

Implement annual reporting and unbiased review of sanctions performance and human rights outcomes, including civil society involvement.

8. Conclusion

The Federation fully supports the *Autonomous Sanctions Amendment (Afghanistan) Regulations 2025*. The reform presents a historic opportunity for Australia to reaffirm leadership in protecting global human rights, maintaining justice, and holding perpetrators accountable.

We urge DFAT to take these steps with transparency, integrity, and urgency — keeping the voices of Afghan women, ethnic minorities (the Hazara), and civil society at the centre of implementation.

The Federation stands ready to support DFAT through continued consultation, evidence creation, and policy advocacy.

Annex I – International Reports and References

- United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Human Rights Reports (2021–2025)
- Amnesty International: Afghanistan Reports on Hazara Persecution and Women’s Rights
- Human Rights Watch: *Afghanistan: Taliban Abuses Against Hazaras* (2023)
- UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Afghanistan, Annual Report 2024
- United Nations General Assembly and Human Rights Council Resolutions (2022–2025)

Annex II – Federation of Hazara Councils, Australia: The Federation Overview

The Federation is a national representative body uniting Hazara community councils and organisations of Australian states and territories. Established to seek justice, inclusion, and representation, the Federation is active in human rights advocacy, multicultural policy, community development, and international relations.

Our mission is to uphold values of equality, dignity, and peace by promoting the rights of disadvantaged groups and building a stronger multicultural Australia through cooperation, education, and advocacy.