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## Iran daily deporting thousands of Afghans to Herat

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Iran has been forcefully deporting Afghan refugees by the thousands on a daily basis o western Herat province, an official said on Monday.

Provincial Refugee and Repatriate Department head Hamidullah Khatibi told Pajhwok Afghan News the neighbouring country had so far expelled 103,086 Afghan refugees as of mid November this year.

Millions of Afghans fled to Iran and Pakistan in the 1980s to flee a bloody anti-Communist insurgency. At the peak of the war, roughly 5 million refugees lived in Pakistan and nearly 4 million in Iran.

Currently, according to the Human Rights Watch (HRW) estimates, about two million Afghans still live in Iran as unregistered refugees.

Khatibi said the number of Afghans forcefully deported last year stood at more than 173,000. However, he said Iran expelled up to 1,000 Afghans in groups on a daily basis.

The official cited two reasons behind the mass deportation, saying Iran did not allow undocumented refugees to stay anymore there and secondly Afghans living there wanted to return home country due to unbearable abuses and insult at the hands of Iranian police.

These Afghan refugees are deported to Herat through the Islam Qala dry port, also known Dogharon on the Iranian side of the border, about 125 kilometres west of Herat City.

At the port, an Afghan border police official, who did not provide his name, took this reporter to a group of 300 individuals, who have newly been expelled from Iran.

Most of the deported people were barefoot and had their clothes ripped off with signs of torture visible on their bodies.

The police official said Afghan refugees were expelled by Iran on a daily basis in such inhuman way.

He said the refugee department in cooperation with the International Refugee Organisation had set up a medical facility to treat such returnees. He said the returnees were being assisted in reaching home in their respective provinces.

Those expelled from Iran include women, children and young men, hailing from various provinces.

One of them, Noorullah, a resident of Behsud district in eastern Nangarhar province, told Pajhwok Afghan News he had to leave for Iran due to employment and poverty.

Complaining against his mistreatment in Iran, he said: "The Iranians treated us so badly that I cannot explain."

Noorullah, who entered Iran in a search of job through a smuggling route in Nimroz province, wanted to reach Shiraz, the capital of Fars province, but was arrested by police.

Having signs of torture on his body, Noorullah said the Iranian police insulted him and beat him severely after his arrest.

Another deportee, Khan Bacha, a resident of Syed Karam district in southeastern Paktia province, said Iranian police subjected to violence those Afghans who had no money to pay them.