

URGENT ACTION

EDUCATION ACTIVIST ARBITRARILY DETAINED

Ahmad Fahim Azimi and Seddiqullah Afghan, activists working with the education organization Fekre Behtar, were arbitrarily arrested at their office in Karta Char, Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, by the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) District 40, on 17 October 2023. While Seddiqullah Afghan was released on 9 April under the Taliban's supreme leader Eid pardon decision for prisoners, Ahmad Fahim Azimi is imprisoned in Pul-e-Charkhi prison. He is falsely accused of working against the Taliban de-facto authorities, convicted through an unfair trial by the Taliban primary court, and sentenced to one year in prison. His arrest, arbitrary detention, and unfair trial are against international human rights law. He must be immediately and unconditionally released.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq
Director of Intelligence
General Directorate of Intelligence
Chaharahi Zanbaq
Kabul, Afghanistan

Dear Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the arbitrary arrest and detention of education activist Ahmad Fahim Azimi who works with Fekre Behtar, an organization which is recognized for its work with the Afghan girls' robotics team. The organization is also a vocal critic of the education restrictions the Taliban imposes on women and girls.

On 17 October 2023, Ahmad Fahim Azimi was arrested by members of the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) District 40 at their office in Karta Char, Kabul. He was kept in GDI District 40 for 72 days for interrogation. He is falsely accused of assisting girls from the national robotic team to leave the country, inciting women protestors, and organizing protests. Azimi and his families have refuted these allegations. Initially the Taliban judge deemed the interrogation findings inconclusive and ordered his transfer to Pul-e-Charkhi prison until completion of interrogation. However, on 1 April 2024, he was brought to the court where he was convicted and sentenced to one year in prison. This court decision was made in the absence of his family and fair trial, and it was announced to them only on 1 April.

Due to the ordeal Azimi has endured, his father suffered a severe stroke and is currently hospitalized. Additionally, I am gravely concerned that Azimi is reportedly subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, including sleep deprivation and solitary confinement. There are growing fears that these abuses will persist.

Ahmad Fahim Azimi's situation represents a clear violation of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and a fair trial – rights that are guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Afghanistan is a state party.

I therefore urge you to:

- **Immediately and unconditionally release Ahmad Fahim Azimi;**
- **Uphold the obligations imposed under the Convention against Discrimination in Education by immediately allowing girls of all ages to attend school and receive education on an equal basis with boys;**
- **Stop the practices of abduction, arbitrary detention, and torture and other ill treatment of people working to defend human rights including those peacefully campaigning for the right to education.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 17 October 2023, at 4 pm, the Taliban GDI District 40 special forces entered Fekre Behtar's office and arbitrarily arrested Ahmad Fahim Azimi. Azimi was then brought to the court for forced confession for inciting women to protest and organizing protests. Both Azimi and his family denied these allegations. Despite their plea of Azimi's innocence, on 1 April 2024, the Taliban primary court convicted Azimi and sentenced him to a year in prison following an unfair trial and lack of due process.

Following the court decision, Ahmad Fahim Azimi's father suffered a severe stroke. The stroke has left him in a critical condition, requiring constant medical attention and intensive care. He is currently hospitalized, and his prognosis is uncertain. The immense stress and anxiety over his son's wrongful imprisonment have exacerbated his health condition.

Ahmad Fahim Azimi is an education activist working with Fekre Behtar organization which is highly recognized for its advocacy for girls' education and its criticism of the Taliban's ban on girls' education. Azimi has worked closely with the Afghan national robotic girls' team in Herat province. Fekre Behtar has been working to carry out educational activities in coordination with existing working legislation and procedures for the past two years offering training for Afghan girls in the fields of languages and robotics.

Ahmad Fahim Azimi and Seddiqullah Afghan were held in the GDI District 40 detention centre for 72 days, allegedly accused of assisting girls from the national robotic team to leave the country, and inciting women to protest and organizing protests. In these 72 days, both activists endured physical and psychological torture as well as other forms of ill treatment. They have been deprived of sleep and kept in solitary confinement. They were not provided access to a lawyer during the interrogation period, nor access to medical support. Seddiqullah Afghan was released on 9 April under the Taliban's supreme leader Eid pardon decision for prisoners.

The United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)) have condemned Azimi and Afghan's arbitrary arrest and called for an immediate end to arbitrary arrests, as well as for the rights to family visit, lawyers, care, and fair trial to be upheld. UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders [Mary Lawlor](#) has called for the immediate release of these two activists. [UN experts](#) also urged for the immediate release of Afghan rights defenders, on 22 April 2024.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Dari, Farsi and Pashto.
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 9 July 2024
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Ahmad Fahim Azimi (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/7663/2024/en/>