**Clear Violation of Afghan Singers’ Human Rights and the Stance of International Humanitarian Organizations**

**Source**: Pashtomusic.org/report

The blatant violation of Afghan singers' human rights in Afghanistan has become a pressing issue, intensifying since the Taliban's return to power. The Taliban's hardline stance deems music religiously forbidden, leading to harassment, threats, imprisonment, and the forced displacement of many artists.

Reports indicate various forms of human rights violations against Afghan singers, prompting reactions from local and international human rights organizations:

**Key Violations:**

1. **Threats and Physical Harassment**: Singers and those associated with music face risks of arrest, torture, or even death.
2. **Ban on Musical Activities**: Musical events, gatherings, and related activities have been prohibited. Musical instruments are being destroyed en masse.
3. **Forced Displacement**: Many artists have fled to Iran, Pakistan, or other countries to escape persecution.
4. **Economic Devastation**: Artists and businesses connected to music have lost their primary sources of income.

An Afghan tabla player, speaking anonymously from Peshawar, shared:
*"After the Taliban returned, I spent a year in Afghanistan unemployed. Eventually, I was left with no choice but to sell my father's last piece of land to send my son to Turkey via Iran. My son disappeared in the forests of Croatia; I don't know if he's dead or alive. I fled with my youngest son to Peshawar via Boldak. Now, I live in a damp room here, while my wife and five daughters remain in Afghanistan. Believe me, I am lying here in despair, struggling to survive."*

**Historical Context and Current Reality:**

After the Taliban's first regime fell in 2001, small music studios and sound system businesses began to flourish. However, with the Taliban's resurgence, these businesses have collapsed.

The owner of a private music studio in Kabul recounted:
*"During the first week of the Taliban's return, several men entered my studio. I never thought they would attack musical instruments again like before. Unfortunately, they destroyed the instruments in the hall and damaged mixers, microphones, and other equipment. I was imprisoned for a week. When released, I went to the Ministry of Information and Culture to file a complaint, only to be told, ‘You have no right to complain because you served the tyrants for 20 years. Repent to God.’"*

The Taliban, viewing music as a tool of tyranny and sin, have banned it nationwide. The Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice has proudly reported destroying tens of thousands of musical instruments as part of its efforts.

**Stance of International Humanitarian Organizations:**

Global human rights organizations, including the **United Nations**, **Amnesty International**, and **Human Rights Watch**, have strongly condemned these actions. They argue that such measures violate freedom of expression, cultural rights, and international human rights principles.

These organizations have urged the Taliban to:

* Ensure the safety of artists and cultural activists.
* Allow the resumption of musical and cultural activities.
* Hold perpetrators of violence against artists accountable.
* Facilitate support for refugees fleeing persecution.

However, Afghan musicians living in neighboring countries like Iran and Pakistan report receiving little to no support and continue to face severe challenges.

**Broader Implications:**

The Taliban's restrictions on music have been overshadowed by the broader issue of bans on girls’ education, drawing limited attention from both the Afghan public and international organizations. The Taliban reject any international or regional intervention on this matter, condemning such efforts as foreign interference.

Domestic human rights activists, most of whom are now in exile, call on the United Nations to address the plight of Afghan singers both inside Afghanistan and in neighboring countries. They stress the urgent need to prevent the starvation and death of individuals linked to the music industry.

These activists believe that the ongoing restrictions on musicians are not only a direct challenge to Afghan culture, music, and history but also a grave humanitarian crisis. They urge the international community to take decisive steps to safeguard the lives and cultural rights of these individuals, emphasizing the need for immediate action.