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The humanitarian crisis emerging for Afghanistan and Afghan refugees

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

A humanitarian crisis is emerging in Afghanistan. According to the United Nations, there are nearly 5.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan, 546 000 of whom have been displaced from January to July 2021. During this period, a further 663 000 Afghans returned to Afghanistan from Iran and 7 600 from Pakistan, bringing with them their own specific humanitarian needs. The World Food Programme serves some 14 million people in Afghanistan suffering from food insecurity due to drought and conflict. These figures are likely to rise in the wake of the political and economic instability of the country. In its Resolution of 24 August 2021, the UN Human Rights Council underlined the severe human rights outlook for Afghanistan.

The total collapse of the Afghan Government in August 2021 has brought about a new wave of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers. The European Union and NATO allies have expressed their willingness to resettle Afghan refugees who worked for them and deportations of rejected asylum seekers to Afghanistan have been suspended. At the same time, Afghans account for the second largest group of migrants / asylum seekers / refugees on the so-called Balkan route to western Europe and more Afghans are expected to arrive via Iran to Turkey, through Afghanistan's northern borders to the Russian Federation and across the Mediterranean Sea to Cyprus, Italy and Malta.

Given the magnitude of this humanitarian emergency, member States of the Council of Europe must co-operate more closely in providing international protection to Afghan refugees and asylum seekers and those with protection needs, as well as increase their humanitarian aid to IDPs in Afghanistan. The Parliamentary Assembly should recall the member States, including national parliaments, the applicable legal obligations, including under the European Convention on Human Rights and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), to ensure full respect of rights of those fleeing Afghanistan.

