

1.4.2. Returns from Europe

1.4.2. Returns from Europe

After the Taliban takeover, many Western states halted deportations to Afghanistan, and IOM^{[511](#)} and Frontex suspended activities facilitating accompanied returns.^{[512](#)} As reported by SEM, there have only been isolated cases of repatriations and voluntary returns from European countries and North America.^{[513](#)} Initially, this included a few cases of people being forcibly returned from the US (two persons in 2022),^{[514](#)} Belgium (February 2023),^{[515](#)} Sweden (via Uzbekistan in 2023), and Switzerland (two persons in October 2024).^{[516](#)} There have also been cases of voluntary returns from EU states,^{[517](#)} and many Afghans residing abroad, including in Western countries, have been going on short-term visits to Afghanistan.^{[518](#)}

Some EU states have sought to deport Afghans whose asylum applications have been rejected, with Germany and Austria resuming deportations in 2024^{[519](#)} and 2025 respectively.^{[520](#)} Germany deported 28 Afghans with criminal records on 30 August 2024.^{[521](#)} According to Der Spiegel, these individuals were detained upon their return, but most were released about a week later, after their families assured the de facto authorities that they would not commit future crime. A handful of individuals were kept in house arrest-like conditions, while being interrogated.^{[522](#)} One deported person was reportedly killed, although the perpetrating actor was not specified.^{[523](#)} Germany conducted a second deportation on 18 July 2025, this time of 81 Afghans with criminal records.^{[524](#)} The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan said that he had no information on the treatment of these individuals upon their return.^{[525](#)} According to the German media outlet Tagesschau, the de facto authorities have used this opportunity to promote a positive image of themselves by publishing videos featuring these individuals being welcomed back to Afghanistan.^{[526](#)} Austria deported one man convicted of crime on 21 October 2025.^{[527](#)}

The de facto authorities reportedly see engagement over migration management as a way to build relations in the absence of diplomatic recognition.^{[528](#)} An anonymous source interviewed by ACCORD noted that, unlike under the former government, European countries are no longer in position to push for a system supporting deported Afghans ‘to provide a landing’, such as mental health support, housing, job training, and more. This leaves returnees more vulnerable for re-traumatisation due to displacement.^{[529](#)}

Being interviewed on the topic of ‘westernization’, Ruttig told ACCORD that individuals perceived as ‘infected’ by Western values have been met with suspicion, and the Taliban have been targeting such individuals, including urban residents, civil society activists, individuals having a Western education or who had adopted a lifestyle deviating from local customs.^{[530](#)}

^{[511](#)}

CoE Parliamentary Assembly, The humanitarian crisis emerging for Afghanistan and Afghan refugees, 25 September 2023, [url](#), para. 37; IOM, Assisted Voluntary Return & Reintegration, n.d., [url](#)

^{[512](#)}

CoE Parliamentary Assembly, The humanitarian crisis emerging for Afghanistan and Afghan refugees, 25 September 2023, [url](#), para. 37; Frontex, Risk Analysis for 2022/2023, September 2022, [url](#), p. 24

[513](#)

Switzerland, SEM, Focus Afghanistan, Return from abroad, 14 February 2025, [url](#), p. 12

[514](#)

Switzerland, SEM, Focus Afghanistan, Return from abroad, 14 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13; Belgium, Cedoca, COI Focus, Afghanistan. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14 December 2023, [url](#), pp. 18–19

[515](#)

Belgium, Cedoca, COI Focus, Afghanistan. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14 December 2023, [url](#), p. 18

[516](#)

Switzerland, SEM, Focus Afghanistan, Return from abroad, 14 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13

[517](#)

Switzerland, SEM, Focus Afghanistan, Return from abroad, 14 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13; The Netherlands, General country information report Afghanistan, June 2023, [url](#), p. 136

[518](#)

Washington Post (The), Women despair over Taliban rules, but many Afghan returnees don't see it, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

[519](#)

JURISTnews, Germany deports 28 Afghan nationals following Solingen knife attack, citing security concerns, 30 August 2024, [url](#)

[520](#)

Reuters, Austria deports first Afghan since Taliban seized power, says more to come, 21 October 2025, [url](#)

[521](#)

Al Jazeera, Germany deports 28 Afghans for first time since 2021 Taliban takeover, 30 August 2024, [url](#)

[522](#)

Amu TV, Taliban releases 28 deportees from Germany, Spiegel reports, 8 September 2024, [url](#); Der Spiegel, Taliban lassen aus Deutschland abgeschobene Straftäter schon wieder frei, 6 September 2024, [url](#)

[523](#)

German Institute for Human Rights, Afghanistan in 2025: Richard Bennett on the Struggle for Human Rights, 1 September 2025, [url](#)

[524](#)

Euronews, Germany departs 81 Afghan nationals under tougher migration policy, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

[525](#)

German Institute for Human Rights, Afghanistan in 2025: Richard Bennett on the Struggle for Human Rights, 1 September 2025, [url](#)

[526](#)

Tagesschau, Die Show der Taliban, 20 July 2025, [url](#)

[527](#)

Reuters, Austria departs first Afghan since Taliban seized power, says more to come, 21 October 2025, [url](#)

[528](#)

Hakimi, H., Push to deport failed Afghan asylum seekers from Europe could benefit the Taliban, Chatham House, 3 October 2025, [url](#)

[529](#)

ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 85

[530](#)

ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 82