

# 3.14.1. Violence against children

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: June 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: COI Update 2026, 1.; Country Focus 2026, 2.4., 3.2., 4.4.7.; Country Focus 2024, 2.5.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The ongoing economic and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan has led to households resorting to negative coping strategies including those exposing children to violence and/or impacting significantly on their life. For violence against girls see 3.13. Women and girls.

Additionally, in 2026, the *de facto* government issued a 'Criminal Procedure Code for Courts'. Although there is currently no available information about its implementation, it is reported that some provisions prohibit physical forms of violence against children by teachers only if they result in 'bone fracture', 'torn skin' or 'bodily bruising'. The law also grants a father the right to punish his 10 years old son when the child is acting against his own interest, such in the case of abandoning prayer.

**Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?**

**Acts to which children could be exposed are of a such severe nature that they would amount to persecution**. More specifically, children have been sold and in extreme but documented cases, sold for their body organs, forced into marriages or exploited in child labour 18. Children have reportedly also been victims of violent crimes such as rape and extrajudicial killings with many incidents linked to Taliban members or unidentified individuals.

Abuses of boys also occur in the form of *bacha bazi* (practice that refers to boys being dressed up like girls and forced to dance in front of older men with many of them being raped). Both perpetrators and victims of the practice have been stigmatised by the surrounding community, although it usually has affected the victim more than the perpetrator due to their weak social position. After the Taliban takeover in 2021, the practice reportedly continued and boys as young as nine years old were exploited.

Children may also be recruited by the Taliban and other armed groups. See 3.14.2. Child recruitment.

Being a child is to be taken into account in the assessment on whether an act reaches the threshold of persecution.

**Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?**

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for **boys** to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Socio-economic situation of the child and the family**: the ongoing economic crisis may force families in poor economic conditions to resort to negative coping strategies, resulting in violence against children such as child marriage or selling children. Being part of a female-headed household might also increase the risk.
- **Available support network**: the lack of a support network considerably increases the risk for children to any form of abuse.
- **Displacement**: being displaced increases the risk for children to any form of abuse.
- **Age and appearance**: young non-bearded boys (from the age of 9 years old) could be subjected to *bacha bazi*.
- **Occupation**: boys employed as bodyguards, secretaries, support staff or drivers for Taliban members are vulnerable to sexual abuse by their superiors.

In the case of a female applicant under this profile, it is reminded that in light of the current situation, a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for Afghan women and girls.

For additional information, see 3.13. Women and girls

**Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?**

The individual circumstances of the child need to be taken into account to determine whether a nexus to a reason for persecution can be substantiated in relation to a well-founded fear of violence.

For example, in individual cases, a link could be established to **membership of a particular social group**, e.g. boys who have been subjected to *bacha bazi* could have a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of membership of a particular social group, based on common background that cannot be changed and having a distinct identity linked to their stigmatisation by the surrounding society.

- 18

  Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour, an assessment should be made in light of the nature of the work and the age of the child. Work that is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children could be considered to reach the severity of persecution. The impact of child labour on access to education should also be taken into account. Other risks, such as involvement in criminal activities and trafficking should also be considered. International Labour Organization (ILO), Convention C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), 26 June 1973; Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention,

Convention C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), 17 June 1999.

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu