



**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF AFGHANISTAN
NATIONALS' PRESENCE IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AND
ITS IMPACT ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY DURING TALIBAN'S
TENURE AND POST-TALIBAN GOVERNANCE**

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Abstract:

The immigration phenomenon in Iran, like other immigrant host countries, is a two dimensional phenomenon and alongside the creation of an opportunity in cultural, economic and social exchanges, problems such as population imbalance, rise in unemployment and appearance of insecurity also come about. From 1979 to-date, the Islamic Republic of Iran has practically constantly been host to 2 million to foreigners including immigrants and refugees and at times the number has reached to more than 4 million, most of whom are from Afghanistan, therefore the aim of this research is the study of the positive aspects and challenges of their presence in the social, economic and cultural spheres and particularly its effects on national security following the coming to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan. In this research through the use of the descriptive-analytical method and by making use of existing documents and records, collect information and brief and determine concepts related to the presence of Afghan refugees in the country. According to the conclusions of this research, particularly in various areas which affect national security, it shows that due to various reasons which will be explained, we did not manage to have enough benefits from the potential of this presence in cultural, trade and international potentials as we should. The conclusions of this research and the use of presented recommendations by relevant departments such as Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA), shows that with the right planning while creating a safe and lawful environment for Afghan refugees, how the way is paved for their sustainable return to their country while benefiting the reduction the destructive security effects of their presence.

Keywords: Afghan nationals, asylum seekers, refugees, immigrants, Taliban, Islamic republic of Iran's national security

1. Progress and gaps in Education prior 2015

The presence of refugees, displaced persons and foreign nationals in Iran has a historical background, but what has been highlighted and discussed in this article is the status of these foreign nationals and their impact on the national security after the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and especially after the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan in 1996. Since 1979 until 2017, after the Islamic Revolution, by facilitating the entry of the Afghan nationals into the country, Iran has almost been hosted for at least two million refugees and asylum seekers, and even in some periods, it has grown to more than four million foreign nationals. The majority of refugees living in the Islamic Republic of Iran are Afghans, entering the country in the early 1981s. Due to the establishment of the Shiite regime in Iran and also because of the security problems inside Afghanistan mainly After Taliban forces came to power, over 70 percent of the Afghan nations in Iran are composed of Hazareh and Tajik tribes and the rest are other Afghan tribes including Pashtun.

Iran, by joining Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in 1963 and its protocol in 1975 has recognized granting refugee status. As both document - Convention and its Protocol - have been signed during the Shah regime, Iranian Guardian Council, in July 1986 announced that as long as the existing laws are not inapplicable by law and the Guardian Council does not take an interpretative position, existing laws remain applicable.

On the other hand, in the legal field, it is worth noting that, according to the law, every individual's request for asylum is individually and individually treated, so when a group of people are refugees to Iran (like the Afghans). The executive function of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been to temporarily settle all of them and subsequently to individual asylum applications separately, in which case they will be issued a residence permit or a refugee card, otherwise they will be expelled.

The policy of open doors and facilitating laws made it possible for the Islamic Republic of Iran, at present, to host one of the largest refugee populations in the world, including Afghan refugees, who have stayed in the country for nearly four decades; Iran is the fourth refugee country in the world 2014 has been. According to the Directorate General of BAFIA, in May 2015, the total number of registered refugees is 979,410. Of these, 951,142 people are Afghan refugees and 28,268 are Iraqi refugees. Most refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran reside in urban areas, and only 3% of them are resident in 22 guesthouses in different provinces, and all of them have received identity cards in accordance with the laws. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 620,000 Afghan passport holders, many of them previously undocumented or Amayesh cardholders, have been issued with Iranian visas that allow them to reside legally in the country, while the government estimates

that 1.5 - 2 million undocumented Afghans live in Iran. As part of the government's efforts to regularize the documentation status of the Afghan population in Iran, an identification exercise was initiated in January 2017, gradually targeting different categories of undocumented Afghans. A complementary identification exercise for Afghans holding expired documents started in August 2017, in which approximately 800,000 individuals were identified.

The question is that, does the presence of this number of foreign nationals, especially the high number of undocumented Afghans, and has had an impact on the national security situation? What has this labor force exerted on the labor market and Iranian foreign relations? What are the challenges and opportunities of this presence? These are all questions that have been tried to be answered in this article.

2. Literature Review

So far, numerous articles and books have been written about the migration and its various dimensions in the country, but what has been discussed less is the security issue of the presence of refugees, asylum seekers and Afghan refugees in Iran and the consequences of this field.

So far, research has been done in the field of foreign nationals in the country, in particular refugees, asylum seekers and unauthorized persons, either in a provincial, or in a specific area, such as legal matters, the right to work, the right to education or the right to move. These cases indicate that the background to the migration of Afghans to Iran and their effects for immigration, especially in the security field, is negligible. This is despite the fact that the two countries of Afghanistan and Iran share historical, linguistic and cultural differences and are neighbors. Despite the amount of research and articles directly related to the presence of refugees and their effect on national security, or because of the special circumstances of the inaccessibility or customization of existing resources, several articles, the ending of the title, which was somewhat functional and has been prepared in this way can be summarized as follows:

- Ekhlosipour (2016) in the article "Pathology of the presence of foreign nationals in Kerman province and its effect on security" focuses on the negative effects of the presence of foreign nationals, with a focus on Afghan citizens on the security situation in Kerman province. He used existing documents to collect information and explain the concepts, principles of strategies and structure in the field of pathology of the presence of foreign nationals in Kerman province and its effects on the security field. Based on the results of this study, the existing rules of the administrative organization did not have the power to confront immigrants who seek Iranian identity documents. Special circumstances after the revolution have created a period of irregularity and the plurality of power centers.
- Alavi (2016), in his dissertation titled "The Impact of Afghan Citizens' Migration on their Misdemeanor in Mashhad City", conducted by surveying method and by means of collecting information by questionnaire and interview, preparing

two types of questionnaires for two delinquent migrant groups And a non-violent immigrant Afghan citizen. He in this research, he has tried to show that the situation of immigrants with jobs is different from those who are unemployed. Accordingly, it has been shown that the non-criminal individuals of the Afghan people are more engaged and the traffickers are more unemployed, and this leads to the conclusion that the criminal migrants have committed crimes because of unemployment and lack of job, and unemployment plays an important role in committing a crime. And the rate of unemployment among immigrant offenders is higher.

- In fact, he has shown that the lack of work naturally has many complications and abnormalities. He has shown that most of the offenses committed in Mashhad by Afghan nationals are related to drug trafficking crimes (import, transportation, storage, sale and distribution of narcotics). According to the study, 70 percent of children and adolescents under the age of 18 and 50 percent of Afghan women migrants in Mashhad's prisons were more likely to commit crimes of drug trafficking and 16 percent of adolescents were robbed at the Mashhad Correctional Center. Statistically, the age of the accused and perpetrators in the Mashhad Prison between the ages of 26 and 40, most of whom are married, unemployed, and illiterate, most of whom were illegally entering the country. Afghan crime prevention systems can be used to educate and educate as well as to reduce opportunities in the context of the situation, rather than the mandatory dismissal, which does not have any fruit, because they are back in the current state of Afghanistan as a result of unfavorable conditions.
- Taremi (2015), in his dissertation titled "The Islamic Republic of Iran's Security Challenges against the Workers' Community of Foreigners (Afghanistan)" considers a specific stratum of the community of foreign nationals (workers) and has addressed issues and problems in this area. He has paid more attention to the negative aspects and has not addressed the opportunities of this field. He concludes that what increases the perception of the threat to the Islamic Republic of Iran in the military, political, economic and social spheres, the existence of poverty and unemployment is a major factor in the occurrence of crime in the Afghan labor community in Iran.
- Ahmadi (2014), in his dissertation titled "The Impact of Afghan Immigration on Iran's National Security with Emphasis on Employment," examines the immigration of Afghan citizens to Iran and their employment issue. He has generally divided the threats to the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran into two categories of foreign and domestic actors. And with the research that has been done, it has been concluded that internal factors, including economic disruption and problems such as unemployment, are among the most important national security risks. He analyzed the unemployment rate as well as the employment rate of foreign nationals, as well as interviews with various groups, that there was a direct relationship between the unemployment of

Iranian nationals and the employment of foreign nationals. This means that, given the economic disadvantages, especially unemployment in the country, the employment of foreign nationals can be considered a threat to Iran's national security.

- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2012) in his book "Strategic Solutions for Afghan Refugees, in support of voluntary return, sustainable integration and assistance to refugee countries" has examined the issues of Afghan refugees in both Iran and Pakistan based on accurate statistics on health, livelihoods, education, and so on. It has also examined the situation in Afghanistan to find a lasting solution to accept the country's citizens in Iran and Pakistan. Although this book does not directly address security issues, it lists the factors that affect security issues and has examined the relationship with the field of security by examining these areas (education, health, work and livelihood, etc.).
- In this book, the necessary and influential structures on national security, the association of the refugee community with the body of the host country's community (Iran) and the strengthening of this relationship with the Agency's activities, which can directly affect national security it is one of the most effective and important materials that will be used in this research. Of course, given that the UN Refugee Agency is solely responsible for refugee affairs, its focus is on Afghan citizens legally resident in Iran and registered as refugees.
- Ebadi (1993), in his book entitled "The Rights of Refugees", examined the history of asylum status, the tradition of asylum until constitution and the entry of foreign nationals to Iran, the various issues of foreign nationals in the country are examined from the legal point of view. In his book, referring to various legal sources, he began to collect laws and regulations for foreign nationals, from marriage to property issues. This book is a very good source for the legal discussions of the dissertation, but due to its structure, there is no analytical debate on the security issues of the events of the presence of foreign nationals in the country. Other sources in Persian have been very transient in dealing with the issue of the security of incidents involving the presence of Afghan citizens. Therefore, in this research, we have tried to use the English language resources published by the UN Refugee Agency and its annual reports, as well as reports from relevant NGOs.

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Research

National security refers to conditions that preserve the survival of the national government through the use of economic power, military and political power, and the use of diplomatic means.

"National Security" is a Western concept, especially in the United States, which in the years after 1945, this concept, like all other human sciences, does not have a single, accepted, or at least most of the opinion of the scholars. The root of that discontinuity

also comes from the efforts of individuals, groups and countries in their different perceptions of the term. Accordingly, for example, Arnold Wolfesmie says: "*National security is an ambiguous symbol that cannot be accurate at all.*"

Robert Mandel says: "...national security involves psychological and material safety and is essentially a national responsibility, so as to prevent foreign direct threats to the survival of diets, citizenship and lifestyles of citizens". Walter Lipman on security National has said: "*A nation is a safe time when, in the absence of war, it is not exposed to the sacrifice of its values and, if entered into a war, it can pass its values by winning the war.*"

National security is expressed in two distinct and positive discourses. National security is focused on protecting the land, sovereignty and people against the dangers and threats of the enemies of the country in a discourse of discourse, while maintaining a national interest in pursuing opportunities for development and progress. Based on the above description and considering the various factors affecting security, the theoretical framework of this research is based on the Copenhagen School of Security, the Copenhagen school, which was inspired by Bowen's writings, including the book *People, State and Panic* in the 1980s, sought to extend the security studies to the military's countries of affairs.

To achieve this goal, the scholars of this school added: 1) added economic, political, social and environmental issues to the security field; 2) rebuilt security as a multi-level concept; 3) integrated regional security theory and 4) for analysis and "deconstruction".

In fact, the Copenhagen School is a term used by Bill McCoy on the writings of Bozan, Eli Weaver, Dwild, and others and they believe that security should not mean a lack of traditional threats, but there are various dimensions of security such as immigration (social issues), cultural issues, the environment and economic well-being (Haji Miine, 2016: 1).

The security theory developed by the Copenhagen School for analyzing security issues is very useful for data analysis. This theory is based more on structuralism and realist epistemology. Accordingly, the security theory seems to be constructive rather than analytical or evaluative. In other words, using this theory, one can consider the way to manage security (in various political, social and economic spheres). In the current era, the modern concept of national security has meant meaning beyond the cease-fire or the refinement of accounts and the approach of reform or hard-security reform.

The Copenhagen School expands the security of single-dimensional security into military, political, economic, social and environmental divisions, with the military-pivotal rejection of security studies (Abdullah Khani, 2006: 1). These dimensions are considered in the forthcoming study. In general, because the Copenhagen School considers a wide range of actors and variables in analyzing and explaining phenomena, especially foreign policy, as a result, we can provide a comprehensive theoretical framework for explaining the domestic and foreign policy of countries and their external relations, a framework that can take into account many of the neglected

mechanisms in traditional security analysis. In this regard, the presence of Afghan citizens and their effects on economic, political, social and environmental issues can be considered in the form and above the traditional concept of threat and security. The presence of Afghan citizens in Iran and their impact in each of these areas can have a positive or negative effect on national security.

Hence, the study will focus on the political, social and economic issues that will be affected by the presence of Afghan citizens.

2.2 Research materials and methods

Descriptive-analytic method has been used in this research; the library information collection method has also been used.

So, using relevant references, libraries, the Internet and other available resources, the information has been gathered. In order to collect information in this study, the Fisher Tool, interview with refugees, immigrants (legal and illegal) residing in different provinces, quotas from BAFIA, UNHCR and NGOs active in this area have been used.

According to the above explanation, the important tools used to collect and classify information in this research are as follows:

- 1) Documents: the use of written materials and thesis as the basis for research
- 2) Interviews: Questions and discussions about the topics with the target people (stakeholders as well as relevant authorities)
- 3) Observations: Collect data through watching or participating in activities

With regard to this information and subject, descriptive statistical methods (process) have been used. Through library compilation, statistics on incidents and security events related to Afghan citizens in Iran are reviewed in a tabular and statistical manner.

2.3 Data analysis

The London-based Legatum Institute, which annually wins the welfare component of 142 to 149 countries worldwide, examines security and safety in both national security and security areas.

With 10 indicators, the Institute ranked the different regions of the world. These indicators include: 1) Civil War, 2) Attack and rape, 3) Population instability, 4) Express political opinions without fear, 5) Injustice and injustice groups, 6) Refugees and internally displaced persons, 7) Immigration of elites and political opponents, 8) Political violence by the state, 9) Stealing, 10) Safe walking at night.

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Year	Global rank	The quality of the economy	Business environment	Governing	Education	Health	Safety and security	Individual freedoms	The per capita income	The environment
2017	117	103	122	133	75	95	119	144	70	113
2016	118	114	114	136	71	92	120	145	74	111
2015	118	114	114	136	71	92	120	145	74	111
2014	118	117	108	137	73	90	128	144	65	111
2013	119	109	111	136	69	84	134	145	54	109
2012	116	112	101	130	69	86	129	144	60	111
2011	116	111	107	133	68	79	135	145	60	106
2010	119	113	107	133	76	74	134	148	103	106
2009	120	114	104	134	79	73	131	149	98	105
2008	118	108	106	130	77	73	125	148	96	103
2007	116	106	104	131	80	73	119	149	83	102

Table 1: The Legatum Prosperity Index™
 (Ranking of Welfare Components Based on Legatum Institute Index)

The census	Year	Number of refugees	Non-refugee number	Total
Registration of refugees	2001	2,350,000	-	-
Amayesh Exercise 1	2003	1,450,000	-	-
Amayesh Exercise 2	2005	914,000	1,000,000 ⁱ	1,914,000
Amayesh Exercise 3	2008	935,512	659,116	1,594,628
Amayesh Exercise 4	2009	1,022,337	-	-
Amayesh Exercise 5	2010	-	-	1,704,199 ⁱⁱ
Amayesh Exercise 6-7	2011	840,158	612,355	1,452,513
Amayesh Exercise 8	2013	845,027	2,000,000 ⁱⁱⁱ	2,845,027
Amayesh Exercise 9	2015	840,000	1,000,000	1,840,000
Amayesh Exercise 10	2016	950,979	630,000	1,583,979
Amayesh Exercise 11	2017	In process	Not announced	Not announced

Table 2: Official Census of Afghan Refugees Residing in Iran (Amayesh Registration Exercise)

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Voluntary Repatriation	117.364	124.615	74.967	225.815	238.384	155.721
Forced Return	42.360	53.897	79.410	95.845	146.387	363.369
Total	159.724	178.512	154.377	321.660	384.771	512.090

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Voluntary Repatriation	74.733	---	---	---	279.012	217.483	286.226	316.415	248.764
Forced Return	406.524	322.008	286.662	211.023	250.731	220.864	218.565	227.601	194.764

Table 3: Statistics on the Repatriation of Afghan Refugees and Migrants from 2002 to 2016
 (Voluntary Repatriation + Compulsory / Deportation)

ⁱ BAFIA Director General's speech (BBC. 19 February 2006).

ⁱⁱ Fars News Agency, 6 May 2012.

ⁱⁱⁱ The status of labor force statistics in Iran and the world, P. 11, Ministry of Cooperatives Labor and Social Welfare, Center for Strategic Stats and Information.

Challenges and opportunities for the presence of Afghan nationals in Iran can be briefly discussed as follows:

2.4 Challenges

- **Population growth:** As a result of the increase in the need for urban and rural services, especially subsidized services, one of the main challenges faced by Iran in dealing with foreign nationals. Due to the weakness of regulatory and administrative infrastructure, this will cost a lot to the government and the people.
- **Increase the public expenditure^{iv}:** The presence of several million foreigners in the country has led to an increase in public service fees, housing rentals, and so on, because the existing infrastructure does not meet all the needs of Iranian and Afghan nationals. Given the vulnerability of foreigners and the fact that they are often low-income and living on the margins of cities, villages and poorer regions, this has a greater impact on vulnerable Iranian nationals living in these areas, and sometimes their lives are more threatened.
- **Reduced local workers' wages:** Due to lower local labor costs and the widening of unemployment, especially in these areas, the livelihoods of nationals of the host country are jeopardized and can expose security risks as well.
- **Exacerbation of xenophobia^v and discrimination:** the spread of unemployment, the creation of competition at different levels, or the cultural encounter between foreign nationals and Iranian nationals, will lead to further alienation and discrimination against people, especially the more vulnerable. Today, the slogan against the Afghan nationals, which threatens to extend the printing and installation of banners, and in cases of beating, are among the cases we are witnessing.
- **Expansion of extremism:** The spread of extremism between the host and guest communities will lead to tensions between the two groups.
- **Expand the sense of nationalism:** Spreading nationalism between both host and guest communities can lead to tensions and security challenges.
- **The spread of contagious diseases:** The spread of contagious diseases from foreigners to the host community is one of the worries that would impose a burden on the health system of the country. In some areas such as Yazd, the intensification of the conflict between Iranian and Afghan nationals, or even one of the factors that triggered these conflicts, was the issue of contagious diseases among these nationals.
- **The lack of full integration of foreign nationals in the host community:** the lack of willingness of the host country to integrate foreign nationals in the

^{iv} Public expenditure is spending made by the government of a country on collective needs and wants such as pension, provision, infrastructure, etc.

^v Xenophobia is the fear and distrust of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange.

country will lead to foreigners being dissuaded. This disjunction can lead to two completely different results. The first result is the spread of the rule of law among foreign nationals and, consequently, the spread of delinquency, smuggling and violating laws that can directly affect security issues, and the consequent creation of a spirit of despair, dismay and mental and psychological problems among foreign nationals. This result can also be directly or indirectly challenged.

- **Spreading delinquency and crime:** Due to the fact that the majority of foreign nationals in Iran are undocumented and reside illegally, they are more likely to violate the law than other foreign nationals, including refugees and passport holders (those who are registered in Iran). As the information of undocumented Afghans is not recorded, it is not possible to prosecute them when necessary (such as when committing a crime).
- **Cultural Confrontation:** Cultural Confrontation is a Cultural Conflict because of the complete lack of cultural coherence between host and guest communities. Especially Afghan nationals living in Iran are from different classes, and even these cultures and customs are not integrated among themselves.
- **Spreading drug trafficking:** Given the ease of transit between the two countries and the high income derived from opiate smuggling, especially because of the production of these materials in Afghanistan, Iran is at risk of spreading drug trafficking and pollution in the country.
- **Legal problems:** Legal problems, especially in the area of mixed marriages, landlord and tenant problems, and worker and employer of Iranian and Afghan nationals, are among the issues that remain despite the existence of various laws. However, BAFIA, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has tried to resolve these problems through the establishment of dispute resolution commissions.
- **Instrumental use of the country of origin from refugees:** The presence of Afghan nationals in Iran can be used as an effective tool for pushing and getting points from the host country from the country's most populous countries. It even describes the presence of Afghan nationals in Iran to the Iranian military forces in Iran.
- **Increasing the military and law enforcement costs:** The breadth of the border between Iran and Afghanistan requires the control of this border, especially with regard to Afghanistan's lower security, because this directly affects national security. Hence, border control and enforcement impose many costs on the country. Expenditures could be directly or indirectly linked to the consolidation of national security, if incurred in civil engineering, employment creation or health.
- **Increased public discontent:** Increased public discontent in the country, especially in cities and villages where more foreigners live there, has directly undermined the national security issue. In the absence of government

intervention, this wave has spread and has led to more and more controversy over the humanitarian issue of the country. In the event of interference, the government faces the problem of internal public opinion and may become a security problem in the long run.

- **Foreign currency departing from the country:** Due to the contentment of the Afghan refugees living in Iran and the low cost of living and living, a large portion of their income is sent to Afghanistan without a tax deduction. According to a research conducted by Mr. Mohammad Hossein Akhlāspour in the article on the pathology of the presence of foreign nationals in Kerman province and its effects on the annual security of \$ 1.2 billion, the only one is the rights of unauthorized nationals living in Iran, who leave the country.
- **Trafficking in currency:** Currency trafficking is one of the challenges faced by the Iranian government during the sanction against Iran by the US.
- **The expansion of black jobs:** the weakening of the rights of Afghan workers, as a result of the inability to support them in cases of incident during work and increasing costs, especially those who do not have the support, as well as the impact of these jobs on the domestic market, given the occupational constraints for significant nationals Is. According to the Directorate General for Foreign Affairs and Immigration Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior, Afghan refugees can only work in four jobs. While residents of nearly fourteen refugees and their proximity to Iranians and the use of capabilities in their capabilities have played a significant role, these individuals have acquired a variety of specializations that are not able to formally engage in these specialties. The four jobs are as follows: 1) Furnishings group 2) Construction work group 3) Agricultural work group such as agricultural businesses, poultry and livestock businesses, slaughterhouse occupations, and leather manufacturing and salamouring businesses. 4) Occupational classes such as casting furnace worker, drainage and loading worker, fertilizer production and drainage and cleaning of sewage pool reservoirs.
- **Spreading human trafficking:** According to the B.B.C. on June 28, 2018, the US Department of State in its annual report has placed Iran as one of the countries that does not meet the minimum criteria for effective counteraction to human trafficking. Iran has also been accused of using child soldiers in the war alongside Burma, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Mali, Niger and Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen. One of the main reasons for human trafficking in Iran, or vice versa, is the desire of the Afghan national to travel to Iran or pass through Iran to EU countries. While it is not possible for them to be widely accepted as refugees, it is difficult for them to obtain a visa, in particular, a work visa. These issues have led to the spread of human trafficking, especially from Afghanistan to Iran. However, as the value of the Rial has lost almost half its value in the unofficial market since the start of the year 2018,

Afghan nationals intend to be resettled in the third countries in order to seek a better job.

2.5 Opportunities

- **Workforce:** Owning a young, cheap and hardworking young migrant worker, especially in jobs where Iranian nationals are reluctant to work in those areas.
- **Promoting bilateral bargaining capacities:** Given the government's failure to accept nearly three million Iranian citizens who are illegally and illegally residing in Iran, This will increase the bargaining power of Iran on bilateral issues, and Iran can use its capacity to pursue its own national interests (for example, to solve the problem of the Hirmand River),
- **Promoting multilateral bargaining capacities:** One of the major challenges faced by European countries is the release of refugees and migrants to these countries. With proper planning, it is possible to secure a significant portion of the costs imposed on the host country through third countries, asylum destinations. However, in other cases this issue can be used as an effective means of bargaining.
- **Promoting International Security:** Following the presence of refugees in Iran, the presence, activity and participation of UN agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), as well as relevant international NGOs, are provided.
- **Expansion of international interactions:** The presence and activity of international organizations in the areas of interest, observance and respect for the laws and regulations of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In view of the mutual benefit of this presence, in many cases, activities or advertisements that cost a lot to the country are due to these channels and channels that connect Iran to the international community. For example, in the case of the Gulf term that is distorted by some Arab countries in the Persian Gulf region, foreign organizations as well as those who are based in Iran should use the correct term (Persian Gulf) in their correspondence. This is evident in official reports, speeches by UN officials, as well as from the European Delegation and other countries involved.
- **Promoting the international status of Iran:** the systematic acceptance of foreign nationals, especially refugees in the country, the presence of UN agencies in the country and the participation of these organizations can greatly improve the international image of Iran. Also, in public opinion, it can be considered a deserving place as a human being.
- **Strengthening economic relations:** The expansion of trade between Afghanistan and Iran is one of the most important opportunities created by the presence of its citizens in Iran, because through the economy it is possible to improve the security situation, in particular national security, to a large extent. Due to its proximity to Iran through the extensive land border, as well as the need for

cheap goods, Afghanistan has provided very good conditions for exporting Iranian products. On the other hand, due to several decades of war in Afghanistan and the destruction of urban infrastructure, the opportunity to export technical and engineering products is also available to the country.

- **Strengthening cultural and political relations:** In this area, fortunately, especially in recent years, the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have practical initiations. Organizing the meetings and sessions for Afghan elite refugees and migrants in Iran as well as holding "Knowing Afghanistan" courses are amongst the measures which can help to improve the cultural and political relations between the two countries and improve the conditions for refugees and migrants' repatriation and integration in their country and strengthen the relations between the two countries.
- **Expansion of Persian language:** One of the most important means of communication and the expansion of the influence of any country is the dominant language of that country. The spread of Persian language in Afghanistan can be the source of easy cooperation between the two countries, especially in the field of trade, which will result in the improvement of the security situation.
- **Promoting religious cooperation through civil society:** Working with civil society, Afghan religious representatives and religious activists residing in Iran can be used to influence Iran's regional influence from Syria and Lebanon to Yemen and Afghanistan.
- **International Financial Transactions:** Given the sanctions against Iran, the use of Afghanistan's potential to face these sanctions can reduce part of the pressure on the country and make financial transfers through Afghanistan to the international community.

3. Recommendations and Suggestions

Taking into account the opportunities and challenges mentioned above in this study, practical solutions to better use of existing opportunities and to overcome challenges are suggested as follows:

- **Applicable laws and regulations:** Unfortunately, the legislation that has been laid down for foreign nationals, especially refugees, is far from the actual situation and, as a result, leads to a violation of the law. For example, jobs that are allowed for refugees are in practice not subject to continuous monitoring and, as a result, they are targeted in some cities. This has created problems for both employers and refugees. In the event that they are expanded to fit the refugee's specialty, and the realities of this list, while regulating their employment, enforcement of law enforcement will also be facilitated.

- **More control of borders:** If it is possible to prevent the entry of unauthorized Afghan citizens from Iran from the very beginning, there will be far less political and security implications for the country. However, in the short term, border controls will cost a lot to the country, but in the long term, it will reduce the many security problems. This control should be in such a way as to minimize the coercive inconsistency. For example, creating natural or abnormal barriers, such as building dykes, walls, etc. Which will prevent the illegal entry of Afghan citizens into the country.
- **Facilitating visa issuance for job applicants in Iran:** Facilitating visa issuance and ensuring that applicants can easily travel to the country will lead to a renewal of the visa once they have expired. This will facilitate observation of Afghan citizens in the country.
- **The targeted recruitment of Afghan refugees:** The targeted recruitment of Afghan specialists and elites, as well as the training of individuals, who can serve Iran's national interests, can be effective in increasing the efficiency and influence both inside and outside the country and the national authority of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Today, unfortunately, the number of illegal immigrants in the country has increased, and even exceeded the permissible number of immigrants. This has reduced the quality of foreign labor in Iran. In many cases, because of the impossibility of recruiting Afghan specialists in Iran, these people, most of them Iranians, are either educated or unemployed or mandatory to leave the country. This issue costs a lot to the country. Each person has an average of 1 \$ million from birth to university (Moharrami, 2015: 19), which is also wiped out by those people.
- **Establishment of a national immigration organization:** The establishment of a national immigration organization is one of the issues that has been raised especially in the recent years but has not emerged. At the present time, the Interior Ministry's Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA), is responsible for immigrants and refugees with a series of disputed laws. Establishing a trustee organization that manages and enforces the issues of immigrants and refugees in the country can be a major step towards improving the security situation of the country, creating opportunities and removing the threats from immigration and regulating mutual rights of the sovereignty and immigrants entering and leaving in Iran.
- **Education and livelihood opportunities:** According to UNHCR studies, the creation of conditions for the return of the best sustainable solution for refugees. This will not be achieved except by upgrading their skills in the host country. These studies show that refugees who are able to create and maintain livelihoods are more likely to return to their country at the time of security. However, despite the considerable generosity of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the living conditions of Afghan refugees have been affected by the introduction of subsidies targeting plan, the global economic downturn and the

intensification of international sanctions, leading to inflation and the consequence of a dramatic increase in the price of various items and services. In the absence of aiding network and other measures of social support, the livelihood of most refugees is at increased risk because of low income and lack of access to financial and credit services provided to the host community. Therefore, this will lead to a security risk, the spread of smuggling of drugs and delinquency by foreigners. In this regard, since the middle of 2014, the number of authorized officially authorized refugees has been increased by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and their access to education and demand-driven skills has improved. Therefore, the development of technical and vocational training among refugees can, while creating their unilateral conditions, play an important role in the national security and observation of refugees and foreign nationals in the country. It also makes it possible to integrate sustainability if they return to their country through specialized expertise and are again not mandatory to return to Iran irregularly.

- **Tax deductions:** Citizens and foreigners can take tax on income from refugees instead of receiving municipal taxes and taxes while implementing a plan that will put economic pressure on refugees and result in dissatisfaction among them. This method can reduce the number of dissatisfactions and exclude those who do not have the ability to work, thus identifying better vulnerable populations and reducing their pressure.

4. Conclusion

With the end of the Taliban's dominance of Afghanistan in 2001 and the formation of a US-backed central government, whispers of Afghan refugee voluntary repatriation became the most sustainable solution to the problem of these refugees. Due to the mentioned event, the repatriation of Afghan nationals (including refugees, migrants and undocumented ones), which has always been one of the demands of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, came close to reality. The Afghans living in Iran were also very promising with the domination of the central government and the presence of the US forces in relation to the future of their country. They hoped that Afghanistan would be a developing country in the region with American support, such as the UAE and Singapore. In this regard, the voluntary return of Afghan refugees has become more serious in a tripartite agreement on the voluntary return of Afghan refugees residing in Iran in 2002 between the Iranian government, Afghanistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Within the framework of this agreement and the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 800,000 refugees (out of 2 million refugees residing in Iran) have voluntarily returned to their country from 2002 to 2006. Along with that, nearly 400,000 Afghans also spontaneously returned to their country (without the support of the UNHCR outside the framework of the above-

mentioned tripartite agreement). But after a year, the hopes of colorful returnees have been diminished, and given the lack of significant reconstruction of Afghanistan and the failure to meet their expectations, this process has not only become minimal, but a reverse reversal.

This indicates the inappropriate political, social and economic situation in Afghanistan, and its remarkable difference with the living conditions in Iran, which encountered policy makers with major problems, and encountered some criticisms and limitations for any form of protection of refugees inside Iran, because the critics considered any kind of domestic support as an obstacle to refusing to return refugees to their country, the security, social and cultural security problems in the country were somehow related to the presence of Afghan nationals.

This issue, coupled with the frustration of those who returned to their country, led to their illicit release to Iran to a large extent, which in some cases led to unconstitutional border forces, popular protests inside Afghanistan and even tensions between the two countries. This wave of returnees to Iran continued in 2007-2010, with nearly two million people illegally entering the country. This was as the government no longer had any extensive security control over them. Therefore, these people, who are close to two million, can have potential risks to the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

These issues caused the population density to collapse in some places, and even in some cases, the population of Afghan nationals would be higher than the population of Iranians. In some cases, tensions have also taken place between nationals of the two countries, for example, in the summer of 2012, following an assault on an eighty-year-old girl in Yazd, which was believed to have been carried out by Afghan nationals, some have launched attacks on Afghan nationals' homes and clashes it was created in this regard. Such issues trigger civil society movements inside and outside the country, as well as protests and protests. Also, in June of 2016, as a result of the publication of Tabnak site, various banners were installed in Zakhra Yazd, which called on the nationals to prevent theft, sale of drugs, intrusion into urban culture, disturbance for the city dwellers 15 days Afghan nationals should dump rentals. This issue can be clearly seen in the above tables as well, as the increase in illegal immigrants in the country has had a negative impact on the security situation, and security indicators have changed, for example, in 2013, this indicator 134 has been upgraded. Although the figures for unauthorized Afghan nationals are also estimated, estimates of the total number of unauthorized nationals who were executed in 2013 confirm somewhat more or less of the same number of unauthorized ones.

However, according to a comprehensive non-compulsory census and the inclusion of their children in command of leadership in Iranian schools, the security index has fallen to 120, due to an increase in unauthorized statistics. One of the main reasons for this decline is the possibility of observing them, the lack of illegal crossing of borders and, consequently, their unilateral integration due to the education of their children.

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DURING TALIBAN'S TENURE AND POST-TALIBAN GOVERNANCE

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