

## Preparing Your Statement in Support of Your Request for Asylum: Guidance for Afghan Asylum Seekers

**In addition to completing the application for asylum (Form I-589), it is good to write out an explanation of your situation so the asylum officer who hears your case is able to understand your story and review the reasons why you are requesting asylum.**

You may wish to write your statement in the language that is most comfortable to you, but remember it must be translated into English in order for the Asylum Office to accept it. You can type or neatly handwrite your statement.

You can send your statement in with your asylum application or take it with you to your asylum interview. If possible, it is good for the asylum officer to have it in advance. If you cannot send it in before your interview, you should still take it along.

Remember, you are trying to prove:

<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You have been seriously harmed in the past (persecuted) in Afghanistan, OR</li> <li>There is a 10% chance you will be seriously harmed (persecuted) in the future.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The people who harmed you are part of the government, OR</li> <li>The government is not willing or able to protect you.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p>People harmed you or want to harm you because of your (1) race, (2) nationality, (3) religion, (4) political opinion, OR (5) membership in a particular social group.</p>

Here are suggestions for how to structure your statement and guidance on what information to include:

### Format

- List your name and immigration number (A number) at the top.
- Title the document "Statement in Support of Asylum."

### Part 1

- Provide a brief explanation of your case. What is the main reason you need asylum?
- General violence or economic difficulties are not enough for asylum.
- Don't say: I need asylum because my country is very dangerous and there are no jobs.
- Do say: I need asylum because I was hurt by [WHO] because [WHY]. I fear they will still want to harm me if I am returned to Afghanistan because [WHY].

### Part 2

- Explain where you grew up, your family situation, and how much school you attended.
- Did you live in a city or rural area? Was your family wealthy?
- Help the asylum officer understand your background.

### Part 3

- Explain when your problems in Afghanistan began. Remember, be specific about who harmed you and why.
- Explain the times you and your family were harmed, threatened, or abused.
- Include as much detail as you can, but don't offer specific dates unless you are absolutely sure of the dates things happened.
- It is better to say "around [month] of [year]" so you can be consistent when you retell your story.

### Part 3 continued

- If you escaped Afghanistan before bad things happened to you, explain why you think you and your family will be harmed in the future.
- Remember to share specific reasons why you will be harmed. It is not enough to say that Afghanistan is violent and unstable.
- Explain why you, in particular, will be targeted by someone who wants to harm you.

### Part 4

- If you asked police or other government officials for help in Afghanistan, explain why they did not provide enough protection to keep you safe.
- Explain why you think government officials in Afghanistan will not keep you safe if you are returned to Afghanistan.

### Part 5

- Explain why moving to a different part of Afghanistan would not be safe.
- Explain other reasons why you could not move to a different part of Afghanistan. For example, if you do not speak the language, could not find work, or would not be accepted in a different part of Afghanistan, explain those challenges.

### Part 6

- Finish your statement by explaining what you think will happen to you if you are returned to Afghanistan.
- Sign and date your statement, then make a copy for your own records.



Throughout your statement explain **why** you think you were harmed or will be harmed. Remember, do not just say you are afraid because there is violence in your country. Explain why the reasons you will be harmed are different from reasons others are afraid.



Your statement does not need to be very long. It is better to keep your statement to about five to ten pages and focus on the parts of your story that explain why you need protection.



You do not need to reference asylum law or country conditions in your statement. It is better to use your statement to tell your personal story from the heart.



At the end of your asylum interview, the asylum officer may ask you if there is anything else you would like to share. You may wish to review your statement and explain anything from your statement that you were not able to discuss during your interview.

**Preparing a strong personal statement is one of the best ways to show you should be granted asylum. Spending time on your statement will help you prepare for your interview so you can tell your story in an organized and detailed way. Good luck!**