

**On the Frontlines: Insights into the State of Protection in 2021**  
**The Global Protection Cluster's End of Year Event**  
**8 December 2021**

**Speaker Profile: Shaharzar Akbar, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission**



*“A legacy of impunity threatens to undermine hopes for peace and justice in Afghanistan for years to come. The international community must urgently address credible allegations of abuse of their own troops, attend to the needs of victims of human rights and international humanitarian law violations, and provide support to the national initiatives for victim-centered justice.”*

*– Shaharzar Akbar*

**Speaker & Organizational Profile:**

Shaharzar Akbar (@ShaharzarAkbar) is the Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. She was previously Deputy on the National Security Council for Peace and Civilian Protection, Senior Advisor to the Afghan President on High Development Councils, and Country Director for Open Society Afghanistan. Shaharzar was the first Afghan woman to study at Oxford University in graduate level after obtaining her BA in anthropology from Smith College in the U.S. She has been a leading advocate of women's rights in Afghanistan. Shaharzar's articles have been published broadly in international and Afghan media including [Washington Post](#), [Newsweek](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [CNN](#), [Just Security](#) and academic journals.

The [Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission \(AIHRC\)](#) is a national human rights institution mandated by the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to protect and monitor human rights in the country. It is an independent institution in line with Resolution 134/48 of the United Nations General Assembly in 1993 and the Paris principles relating to the Status of National Human Rights Institutions.

**Protection Risks in Afghanistan:**

The latest [Protection Analysis Update](#) produced by the Protection Cluster in Afghanistan, alerted to serious protection risks since August when the Taliban assumed the power. Grave violations and human rights abuses have been reported, including summary executions and targeted killing, limited freedom of religion and expression and restricted freedom of movement. Food insecurity and poverty on a staggering rise were increasingly leading families to resort to debt and child labour, as coping mechanisms. Conflict, political crisis and insecurity, have hampered the delivery of safe, dignified and inclusive humanitarian assistance, including government's restrictions on women's participation in certain provinces and sectors.