



Open Letter

The European Association of Legal Interpreters and Translators EULITA would like to express its great concern for local translators and interpreters in Afghanistan, whose lives are currently at risk.

Translators and interpreters are much needed to facilitate exchanges between people who do not express themselves in the same language, be it for the work of journalists in missions carried out abroad, for the running of an embassy or consulate, for the activities of international organizations or NGOs, for delivering humanitarian aid to those in need, etc. They are the language bridge to the local people, albeit their work often remains invisible to the general public.

Interpreters and translators in conflict and war zones, such as Afghanistan, are at a particularly high risk. They are often regarded as traitors and spies, they receive death threats, they are prosecuted for being spies, kidnapped, tortured or killed. Many Afghan interpreters and their family members have already lost their lives since 2001 because of their association with foreign military forces. We regret to say that translators and interpreters are not specifically protected by international legislation despite their often being a target of hostile attacks.

Therefore, EULITA calls upon the European institutions as well as all the governments in Europe to take measures to protect and help not only their nationals in Afghanistan, but also the local interpreters and translators who worked alongside them, as now more than ever their profession has made thousands of them, and their families alike, vulnerable to loss of life, limb and liberty. EULITA strongly believes that Europe has the moral duty to support the local translators and interpreters who helped European countries to conduct their businesses and set up missions in Afghanistan, and who now rely on Europe not for their livelihood, but for their lives.

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