

## Suicides among Afghan teens in Sweden after tougher asylum rules

By [AFP](#)

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A wave of suicides among teenage Afghan migrants in Sweden after it introduced stricter asylum rules has sparked concern among refugee workers and volunteers, they said Wednesday.

In the past two weeks, seven asylum seekers, all unaccompanied minors, have tried to kill themselves at different refugee housing centres across Sweden.

Three of them died, all Afghan teenagers aged under 18, said Mahboba Madadi, who works closely with unaccompanied asylum seekers for a non-profit group.



Refugees sleep outside the entrance of the Swedish Migration Agency's arrival center for asylum seekers at Jagersro in Malmo, Sweden, in November 2015 ©STIG-AKE JONSSON (TT NEWS AGENCY/AFP/File)

"They're afraid of being expelled and have no hope," Madadi told AFP.

In a revised security assessment published in December, the Swedish Migration Board deemed some regions of Afghanistan "less dangerous" despite "increasing violence" in the war-torn country. The assessment has made it easier for authorities to expel rejected asylum seekers to Afghanistan.

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"There are parts of Afghanistan where one can return," a spokesman at the Swedish Migration Board told AFP.

He said rejected asylum seekers under 18 will not be sent back to Afghanistan if they do not have family members or acquaintances to take care of them.

Sara Edvardson Ehrnborg, a teacher who also volunteers for a non-profit group helping refugees, said unaccompanied Afghan migrants were increasingly worried their asylum applications would be rejected.

Loneliness and lack of affection in asylum homes could also trigger the teens to end their lives, according to Madadi.

"They're not happy in the homes. They're kids who need someone who shows them love," she said, expressing concerns that more asylum seekers would attempt suicide.

"We are extremely worried and we want the Swedish government to do something about this," she added.

Sweden took in the highest number of refugees per capita in Europe in 2015, registering 160,000 asylum applications.

Last year, the Scandinavian country granted 2,100 Afghan minors asylum and rejected 600 others.

Sweden is an attractive destination for unaccompanied minors due to its free education system and health care.

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