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Suspicion of irregularities in relation to Norwegian Refugee Council activities in Afghanistan

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark provides support for Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) with the aim of providing safe, dignified and sustainable housing solutions for displaced Afghans and promote socio-economic integration and access to essential services in Afghanistan and Iran. NRC received an initial grant of DKK 24,000,000.00 and an additional grant of DKK 18,000,000.00 grant under the Region of Origin Programme in Afghanistan for the implementation of the project titled "Shelter Solutions, Socio-Economic Reintegration and Urban Regeneration for Displaced Afghans in Afghanistan and Iran", for the period April 2022 - June 2024.

NRC's anti-corruption unit received a whistle-blower complaint accusing one NRC staff of conflict of interest related to beneficiary selection in 2021. Consequently, NRC launched an internal investigation to review the case which included a review of beneficiary documents, staff personnel file and the supporting documents for transactions booked under the project. The amount under suspicion was DKK 4,244.

The internal investigation concluded that two out of the five beneficiaries were from the same village as the NRC officer responsible for the selection, and the NRC officer had been in contact with one of the beneficiaries prior to the selection procedure. When the internal investigation team was ready to formally interview the NRC officer s/he had left NRC.

The investigation was limited due to various challenges in Afghanistan since the Taliban take-over, including risk of retaliation against the whistle-blower.

The loss of DKK 4,244 is covered by NRC. As a consequence of this case, NRC has strengthened its beneficiary selection procedure and banned the concerned staff from returning to NRC.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs thus regards the case as closed without loss of Danish funds.

