



Afghanistan Human Rights Center

Press Release on AHRC Submits Shadow Report to CEDAW Committee Exposing Taliban's Systematic Persecution of Afghan Women

Date: Feb 7, 2025

The Afghanistan Human Rights Center today, on February 7, 2025, submitted its shadow report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to the CEDAW committee. This report has been prepared to draw the CEDAW committee's attention to the widespread and systematic violations of the rights of Afghan women. The report is submitted at a time when women in Afghanistan are facing the most severe forms of discrimination and widespread, systematic deprivation of rights and freedoms.

The report documents how, since returning to power in August 2021, the Taliban have deliberately dismantled women's rights, violating Afghanistan's CEDAW obligations and establishing a regime of gender apartheid that threatens both the lives of Afghan women and the global human rights framework.

The AHRC report presents overwhelming evidence of the Taliban's policies aimed at erasing Afghan women from all aspects of public and private life. Women and girls have been stripped of their right to education, with schools beyond sixth grade and universities closed to them. By banning women from most employment sectors, including NGOs and international organizations, the Taliban have driven them into poverty and financial dependency, further exacerbating poverty and vulnerability of women in the country. Even their presence in public spaces is heavily restricted, with decrees prohibiting them from parks, gyms, and public baths. These measures collectively amount to the most severe and calculated oppression of women in modern history.

Legal protections for women have been completely dismantled. The Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) law has been revoked, leaving women without any recourse to justice. Female judges, lawyers, and prosecutors have been dismissed, and courts now restructured to rule based on the Taliban policy and ideology that overwhelmingly discriminates against women. Reports of forced and child marriages have surged, with the Taliban legalizing practices that allow girls as young as twelve to be married off, often in transactions that serve political and economic purposes. Public floggings and imprisonments of women accused of "moral crimes" have become commonplace, with over 129 women subjected to brutal public punishments in the past three years alone. Afghan women are now not only second-class citizens but are treated as property, with no control over their lives or futures.

The situation is equally dire in healthcare. The Taliban's policies have severely limited women's access to medical services, particularly in rural areas where mobility restrictions and the loss of female healthcare professionals have left many without essential care. With the closure of medical schools to female students, the future of women's healthcare in Afghanistan is in peril. Maternal mortality rates are rising, and access to reproductive health services has been almost entirely cut off. Women suffering from illnesses that require male doctors now face an impossible choice between neglecting their health or

risking public punishment for seeking care. The psychological toll of this systemic oppression has driven many Afghan women to severe depression, with suicide rates increasing among those who see no way forward under Taliban rule.

The Taliban have abolished key institutions that once worked to protect and promote women's rights, including the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which was replaced by the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice—an institution that enforces repressive policies designed to eliminate women from society. Civil society organizations and women's rights groups have been forcibly shut down, leaving Afghan women without advocacy or representation. The Taliban's policies are not just an attack on Afghan women; they are an assault on the very foundations of human rights and gender equality, with global implications. The normalization of gender apartheid in Afghanistan sets a dangerous precedent, emboldening other extremist forces and threatening international progress on women's rights.

The AHRC report calls for immediate international action to hold the Taliban accountable for their violations of CEDAW and other international human rights commitments. It urges global recognition of gender apartheid as a crime against humanity and its inclusion in the framework of the Convention on Crimes Against Humanity. The international community must impose targeted sanctions on the Taliban leadership responsible for these policies, expand asylum pathways for Afghan women facing persecution, and ensure that women's rights remain central to any diplomatic negotiations or humanitarian aid efforts related to Afghanistan. Governments and UN bodies must work together to support alternative education pathways, including online learning and scholarship programs, to ensure that Afghan girls continue to have access to knowledge and opportunities despite the Taliban's oppressive decrees.

The AHRC warns that the Taliban's treatment of women is not just a domestic issue; it is a global crisis that threatens the integrity of international human rights norms. The failure to act decisively will not only abandon millions of Afghan women but will also weaken the global commitment to gender equality and justice. The international community must rise to the challenge, ensuring that the voices of Afghan women are heard and their rights restored.

For media inquiries or to request a copy of the full report, please contact:

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