

WOMEN'S FORUM ON AFGHANISTAN June 2022

As the Taliban fails to fulfill the rhetorical commitments it made to women's rights in hopes of gaining an international audience, the situation for women and girls in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate. And now when the international community is needed more than ever, its stated resolve to stand up for the fundamental human rights of Afghan women is also failing. Among the latest devastating blows to the status of women and girls in Afghanistan are restrictions on dress, on driving, and on movement and assembly, as well as education and employment. The oppression of women is not only a human rights issue. It is not only a social, economic and political issue. It is an issue of national security to which the world must pay attention and respond in a meaningful way for the benefit of regional and global security.

The United Nations Human Rights Council has scheduled an update and interactive dialogue on the situation in Afghanistan at its upcoming session in June. While we welcome and hope to participate in this dialogue, this is not an adequate response to the unfolding crisis in Afghanistan. Women in Kabul and elsewhere around the country are taking to the streets at great risk to their lives because they understand the urgent need for action. We are distressed that no debate on Afghanistan is yet scheduled for this upcoming session and to date not a single member state of the United Nations has even introduced a resolution in response to the state of emergency in Afghanistan. We would expect the Human Rights Council to condemn the systematic discriminatory oppression of Afghan women, to express their solidarity with Afghan women, to hear from the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan whom they appointed, and to further mobilize the Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls, the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and other relevant mechanisms of the Council to address gender apartheid in Afghanistan. A coalition of international organizations has called for these actions, and we urge the Human Rights Council to heed this [call](#).

We urge the Human Rights Council to hold a debate and adopt a strong resolution on Afghanistan at its 50th Session. We urge the UN Security Council to rescind the travel ban exemption for those in the Taliban leadership who are on the UN sanctions list until the Taliban demonstrates through meaningful action that it respects the rights of women and is willing to engage in a political dialogue with them and with a broader, more inclusive representation of the Afghan people. And we urge all Islamic countries and the OIC to hold the Taliban accountable for its serious distortion and misrepresentation of Islam.

More than twenty years ago, the United Nations recognized the critical role of women in the promotion of peace and security in Security Council Resolution 1325. The international community cannot now stand by and watch the sub-human treatment of women without losing its integrity. It must use its political and economic leverage to take effective action. We have heard repeatedly from governments and UN officials that they would judge the Taliban by their deeds, not their words. We will judge the international community too by their deeds, not their words.

Shaharзад Akbar, former Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission

Shukria Barakzai, former Member of Afghan Parliament

Suraya Dalil, former Afghan Minister of Health, former Afghan Ambassador to UN Geneva

Fawzia Koofi, former Deputy Speaker of the Afghan Parliament

Marjan Matin, former Deputy Minister of Education

Horia Musadiq, Founder, Safety and Risk Mitigation Organization

Habiba Sarabi, former Afghan Minister for Women's Affairs, former Governor Bamyān Province

Naheed Sarabi, former Afghan Deputy Minister of Finance

Asila Wardak, former Director General of UN Affairs in the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Women's Forum on Afghanistan is a new initiative created by Afghan and global women leaders to work for the well-being and human rights of the Afghan people, and inclusive solutions to the social, economic, and political challenges the country is currently facing. www.womens-forum-afghanistan.org