



**MARCH 8, 2022**

## **Women's Forum On Afghanistan Brings Global and Afghan Women Leaders Together to Promote the Human Rights of Women and All Afghan People**

***Women are standing up for their rights in Afghanistan and they will not be stopped.***

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In commemoration of International Women's Day, the [Women's Forum on Afghanistan](#) is launching a sustained campaign to secure women's rights in Afghanistan and bring women leaders together in solidarity to address the social, economic, political and humanitarian crisis facing the country. The Women's Forum on Afghanistan grew out of a meeting convened on 20 September 2021 in response to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August. Chaired by Margot Wallström, former Foreign Minister of Sweden and the architect of feminist foreign policy, the meeting brought together Afghan women leaders with global women leaders from Argentina, Greece, Ireland, Liberia, Nepal, Turkey, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, and the United States. The group included a former president, ministers, ambassadors, high-level UN officials, judges, legislators, journalists, academics, artists, and human rights advocates. The [meeting](#) was convened by the Roosevelt House Human Rights Program in collaboration with the Sisterhood is Global Institute and Women for Afghan Women.

Over the past months since it was first convened, the Women's Forum on Afghanistan has promoted dialogue between Afghan women leaders and the United Nations, including UNAMA - the United Nations mission in Afghanistan - as well as government representatives from Canada, Iran, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Tunisia, and the United States. The Women's Forum works to support the individual and collective advocacy efforts of Afghan women leaders on a wide range of human rights issues in Afghanistan. It has also made recommendations, particularly underscoring the interdependence of women's equality and peace and security. As noted by the Women's Forum in its [first statement](#):

**"The repression of women and girls leads to state fragility and failure, threatening regional and global stability. Afghanistan is heading in that direction under the Taliban....Women's rights in Afghanistan - access to education, employment, political participation, resources and freedom of movement - will be a litmus test for the Taliban and the global community."**

While recognizing the immediate priority of humanitarian assistance, including to sustain the national education and health systems, the Women's Forum on Afghanistan calls on all humanitarian actors to live up to their professed commitments to gender equality in all aspects of their efforts to deliver assistance to the people of Afghanistan who are in desperate need. They must include women as decision-makers, negotiators, project managers and direct recipients, and work with and through Afghan women's groups and leaders on the ground and outside the country. The Women's Forum believes that the humanitarian crisis cannot be effectively addressed without also addressing the political crisis in Afghanistan. In looking to the renewal of the UNAMA mandate, the Women's Forum is advocating a greater role for UNAMA in promoting political dialogue and supporting women's participation in political and peace talks, as well as monitoring and reporting on human rights.

The Women's Forum on Afghanistan is led by a Steering Committee, comprised of the following Afghan women leaders:

**Shaharзад Akbar** - Former Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission

**Fatima Gailani** - Former President of the Afghan Red Crescent

**Fawzia Koofi** - Former Deputy Speaker of the Afghan Parliament

**Habiba Sarabi** - Former Afghan Minister for Women's Affairs, former Governor of Bamyan Province

**Asila Wardak** - Former Director General of UN Affairs, Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Founding Member of the Afghan Women's Network

The global women leaders on the Steering Committee include:

**Margot Wallström (Chair)**, Former Foreign Minister of Sweden

**Navi Pillay** - Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, former President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

**Melanne Vermeer** - Executive Director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, former US Ambassador for Global Women's Issues

A growing number of Forum Participants include Afghan women leaders as well as women leaders from Algeria, Argentina, Ecuador, Iraq, Ireland, Jordan, Liberia, Libya, Pakistan, Panama, Somalia, Spain, and the United States. The Women's Forum on Afghanistan is supported logistically by the Sisterhood is Global Institute, an organization founded in 1984 by Robin Morgan and Simone De Beauvoir, pledged to visionary yet pragmatic action in support of women's rights, freedoms, and power.

### **For More Information**

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