



Statement

One-year mark since the fall of Afghanistan

“Women are collectively being written out of society in a way that is unique in the world.” Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and officer-in-charge for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), uttered these words during a Security Council meeting in reference to Afghan girls and women multiple weeks ago.

On the one year anniversary, since the country tragically collapsed into the hands of the Taliban, this statement illustrates a chilling reality. The following is the evidence of this truth:

- One year has passed since the average Afghan teenage girl has had access to a school to study.
- In today’s Afghanistan, the value of holding a PhD and Master’s Degree has decreased simultaneously with the value of a Tajik or Hazara’s life.
- Afghan women are neither safe inside their homes nor can seek safety from the Taliban regime.
- A Taliban supporter will receive more humanitarian international aid through the supply chain than households headed by women.
- Three-quarters of the average Afghan’s income is used solely on one essential need: food.
- An Afghan refugee applying for a visa in the United States must wait an average of 4380 hours to receive a call for an interview.

These compact scenarios provide a superficial glimpse of the unending structural barriers and risks that Afghans, particularly women and children, face every day. The presence of Afghan women and girls has been erased, their basic fundamental rights of expression, freedom of movement, education, and life, systematically curtailed. Furthermore, the current socio-economic crisis owing to sanctions and food insecurity has pushed at least 25 million Afghans into poverty.



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It is with a firm and unending resolve that the Young Afghan Women Movement reaffirms its commitment to advocate for the rights and freedoms of Afghan women and children. To date, more than 1 million school children have been affected by the Taliban's decision to shut down secondary education for girls. Defenders and advocates of democracy and human rights have been experiencing severe physical and verbal abuse when expressing dissent to these radical regulations. Thus, Afghans are threatened by the harsh consequences of non-compliance to the Taliban's decree on one side and by the crushing economic poverty that prevails in the country on the other. Additionally, women who seek psychological safety through work, education, or political participation, face over 30 binding policies that crush these efforts.

Life of minorities post-takeover

In August 2021, at the infancy of the takeover, attacks on 'soft' targets such as mosques, public parks, schools and public transportation were carried out. These attacks were claimed by ISIL-KP, an affiliate of the violent extremist Islamic State group. These institutions housed religious/ethnic minorities, such as Hazara Shias.

Furthermore, according to local reports, foreign extremists, primarily from Chechenya and Uzbekistan, who have joined the Taliban, are settling in Afghanistan by marrying young Afghan girls and divorced Afghan women. Sources substantiate such actions upon the Taliban's efforts to ensure a long-term strong presence of Taliban extremists.

Unending visa delays

On the other side of the border, many Afghans who fled their country as a result of the takeover have been struggling with delayed visa applications. Family separations and visa delays are just one part of the tedious process that Afghan refugees go through. According to the European Union Asylum Agency Report, Afghanistan had the second largest number of asylum applications, followed by Syria, post takeover.

Sanctions amid earthquakes

Today, the United States continues to hold \$7 billion frozen Afghan assets. Following the devastating deaths of more than 1000 people in June 2022, as a result of an earthquake in the eastern region of Afghanistan, the Taliban have requested to free these assets and distribute them along the provinces most affected by the disaster. However, there is deepening mistrust regarding the dissonance between the Taliban's words and actions.



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Regardless, the international community, and in particular the United States, must step up its efforts to facilitate a dialogue with the Afghans at the forefront. This dialogue should take into consideration the establishment of a transparent avenue to receive and distribute the assets impeding corruption in the form of first-come benefits to Taliban supporters.

We furthermore call for Afghanistan's neighbours in South Asia, such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, to build pressure on the Taliban regime through diplomatic channels and push for the re-establishment of safety and security for Afghan women and girls.

The Young Afghan Women Movement is deeply concerned with the slowly disintegrating focus on the Afghan crisis by the international community. This is troubling as it can be considered a sign of complicity and normalisation of the region's decline into protracted conflict. The Young Afghan Women Movement perseveres to act as a reminder to nations across the world that the struggle for women's rights is a universal, feminist, transnational struggle that must be endorsed and supported by those who align themselves with the ideals of democracy and freedom.

One year has gone by, but the memory of the turmoil and takeover is fresh in our minds and our lives. It is our sincere demand that the whole world joins in our efforts to advocate for the freedom and rights of women and young girls of Afghanistan.