

**** Invitation ****

The Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations, UN Women and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security cordially invite you to a virtual event ahead of the United Nations Security Council open debate on Women, Peace and Security

**“Bread, Work, Freedom!”: Women’s Rights and Resistance Under Taliban Rule
How the International Community Must Step Up to Support Afghan Women and Girls**

8:00 am – 10:00 am EST
12 October 2022

RSVP by 5 October 2022 to
pablo.castillo-diaz@unwomen.org

Participants who RSVP will be invited to register in order to receive the zoom link to the event.

The discussion will be conducted virtually via Zoom.

Concept

A year since the Taliban seized power and enacted the most rapid and significant roll-back of human rights for women and girls in decades, it is more important than ever that the international community take decisive action to protect the rights of Afghan women and girls and ensure that they play a central role in determining their country’s future.

The Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN, UN Women and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security invite you to a discussion between Afghan women civil society actors and UN Member States’ representatives, the UN Security Council and the UN leadership about how they can use their leverage, power and resources to protect and promote the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights for Afghan women and girls at this critical time for Afghanistan.

Background

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 has resulted in a rapid, dramatic and severe repression of the rights of Afghan women, girls and marginalized communities such as LGBTQI persons and persons belonging to particular ethnic and religious groups. In this time, the Taliban has enacted more than [30 policies](#) aimed at systematically excluding women and girls from public life, including by imposing, often by force and intimidation, restrictions on their freedom of movement, dress, work, access to education and access to justice. In addition, the Taliban have not only dissolved the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and dismantled the country’s architecture for protection of gender equality, but re-established the Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, which has been tasked with enforcing the Taliban’s interpretation of Islamic law. Access to services for survivors of gender-based violence, which is increasing, no longer exists. Freedom of expression as well as civic space have been severely curtailed, with [women protesters and human rights defenders](#) threatened, abducted, disappeared, detained, tortured, killed and subjected to other forms of reprisals for peacefully protesting or speaking out against the Taliban’s abuses. Meanwhile, women and girls are being disproportionately affected by the country’s dire humanitarian and economic crisis, whose effects are compounded by the Taliban’s restrictions on women’s human rights. In addition, the Taliban’s governance structure remains exclusively male and majority Pashtun.

Panelists

Nayera Kohistani, Member of Justice for Women and Justice for Afghanistan

Ms. Kohistani was an organizer of one of the biggest protests by women in Afghanistan after the fall of Kabul in August 2021. When the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2021, she joined women-led protests against the Taliban's restrictions, and, as part of the 'Bread, Work, and Freedom' movement, organized one of the biggest protests by women in Afghanistan. After being arrested by the Taliban and spending 15 days in a detention center, Ms. Kohistani is more committed than ever to continue her fight against discrimination and oppression.

Heather Barr, Associate Director of the Women's Rights Division, Human Rights Watch

Ms. Barr has researched human rights in countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, South Korea and the US on issues including child marriage, girls' education, women's access to health care, gender-based violence, rights of refugees and prisoners, torture, and human trafficking. She was the interim/acting co-director of the Women's Rights Division from 2018-2021. She joined Human Rights Watch in 2011 in Kabul, Afghanistan, as the Afghanistan researcher, after working for the United Nations in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, and Jordan.

Wazhma Frogh, Founder, Women & Peace Studies Organization

Ms. Frogh is a peacebuilding expert from Afghanistan with over 10 years of direct mediation and conflict resolution experience. During 2017 and 2018, she was appointed by the President of Afghanistan to the High Peace Council to mediate peace negotiations with the Taliban. Along with other key mediators, she initiated the first National Dialogue in Afghanistan, which contributed to the historic three-day ceasefire by the Taliban. In 2012, she founded the Women & Peace Studies Organization, which implements local community-based peacebuilding initiatives in Afghanistan led by women.

Mariam Safi, founding Director of the Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DROPS)

Ms. Safi is a peacebuilding practitioner and researcher with over 15 years of experience working and engaging with the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, and international think-tanks and academic institutions. She is the founding Director of the Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DROPS), founded in Afghanistan, with offices in Kabul and Toronto, which aims to contribute to the building of democratic governance through evidenced-based research, policy-oriented studies, capacity building and networking programs. Ms. Safi has briefed the UN Security Council twice, in [March 2018](#) and, most recently, in [March 2022](#).

Program

<p>8:00 am – 8:05 am</p>	<p>Opening of the forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome remarks, Ambassador Anna Karin Eneström, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations • Remarks by UN Deputy-Secretary General Amina Mohammed
<p>8:05 am – 8:45 am</p>	<p>Moderator: Kaavya Asoka, NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security</p> <p>After the moderator sets the stage, the following panelists from civil society will take the floor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nayera Kohistani, Role of women human rights defenders • Heather Barr, Human rights and accountability



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wazhma Frogh, Humanitarian issues • Mariam Safi, Political path forward for women's rights
8:45 am – 9:30 am	<p>Moderator: Pablo Castillo Diaz, UN Women</p> <p>Member States, UN and civil society representatives are invited to provide brief interventions (1 minute maximum) in reaction to the presentations from the panelists. Interventions must be limited to one minute. If you would like to take the floor, please indicate your interest in your RSVP.</p> <p>Guiding questions for interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can the Security Council, Member States and the UN leadership use their leverage and coordinated action to hold the Taliban accountable for human rights violations and support the rights of Afghan women and girls? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How can the Security Council use all available tools at its disposal, including targeted sanctions such as travel bans, public statements, and bilateral advocacy to send a clear message to the Taliban that women's rights must be upheld? ○ How can the UN, including UNAMA, use its role to monitor and report on human rights conditions in the country, particularly women's rights, support women civil society and women leaders, and ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in any future peace or political process in the country? ○ How can all Member States support the women, peace and security agenda and work together to set clear, coordinated and rights-based conditions for any future engagement with the Taliban, with women's rights and participation at their center? What role can Feminist Foreign Policy countries play?
9:30 am - 9:50 am	<p>Moderator: Pablo Castillo Diaz, UN Women</p> <p>The panelists will be invited to respond and give concluding remarks.</p>
9:50 am - 10:00 am	<p>Closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaavya Asoka, Executive Director, NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security • Åsa Regnér, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women • Ambassador Eneström, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the UN

Simultaneous interpretation into Dari and Pashto will be available for the event.