

STOP GENDER APARTHEID

A CAMPAIGN FOR AFGHAN WOMEN AND GIRLS

AFGHAN WOMEN ENDURING GENDER APARTHEID

In August 2021, U.S. troops withdrew from Afghanistan and the nation's capital Kabul fell to Taliban rule. Shortly, decades' worth of progress and freedoms were stripped away from Afghan women and girls. The Taliban instituted a system of Gender Apartheid where women and girls are no longer allowed to seek education after the sixth grade, employment or participate in any of the freedoms they had enjoyed under the Afghan government during the previous 20 years. As soon as the Taliban took control, each day has brought more and more restrictions.

CURRENT TALIBAN EDICTS, ORDERS, AND DIRECTIVES

The Taliban is not nationally recognized as a government and their edicts are typically proposed by various authorities in the regime and upheld through de facto police forces and Taliban authorities. If one does not obey the restrictions, women and girls are subject to brutal punishment, detention, harsh physical violence, flogging, and sometimes even death.

Since the Taliban returned to power, the terrorist group has issued over 150 edicts, orders, and directives that target women and girls. Some orders come straight from the Taliban supreme

leader Hibatullah Akhundzada. Others come from the Ministry of the Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue. These edicts typically target the social and public life of women and girls, focusing on the regulation of their actions and the prohibition of their freedoms. Orders are enforced through arrest, detention, physical abuse, and even death. While below is a list of some of the current edicts, it is important to know that edicts, orders, and directives are continually being issued by the Taliban to restrict the personhood of women and girls.

MAJOR RIGHTS TAKEN

- Girls above age 10 are no longer allowed to pursue education;
- Women are not allowed to leave their homes unless necessary and accompanied by a male chaperone;
- Women cannot have driver's licenses;
- Women are not allowed to work, go to parks, gyms, and go shopping;
- Women and girls are detained on accusations of not wearing "proper hijab";
- Sharia law punishment has been implemented, including public amputations, executions, and stoning
- Women are banned from flying or leaving the country without a mahram or male guardian.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS UNDER THE TALIBAN

Millions of Afghans have suffered economic decay, unemployment and famine, creating a humanitarian crisis. As of 2025-2026, more than 17 million people, over one-third of Afghanistan's population, face severe food insecurity, with millions at emergency levels of hunger and nearly 3.7 million children under five suffering from acute malnutrition. The international community should provide aid without normalizing and recognizing the Taliban and should not allow the Taliban to control aid distribution. Any assistance must require women to take part in the distribution and receipt of aid.

INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT DURING TWO DECADES

In the 20 years (2002-2021), before the Taliban takeover in 2021, Afghan women served as Cabinet, House, Senate, and Provincial Council members. Afghan women were prominent members of civil society and had been serving their nation as nurses, doctors, and teachers at all levels. They were active members, though still small in numbers, of the police and defense forces. Afghan women had also been remarkable investors in Afghanistan and had hired thousands of their fellow Afghans in their newly found businesses. These are all positions and freedoms that were taken away from Afghan women when the Taliban took control of the government.

BRIEF BACKGROUND ON CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN 1979 - 2001

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, propping up a Communist government. As a result, the U.S. supported groups of Afghan leaders to oust the Soviet Union. In 1989, the Soviet troops were defeated. The lack of leadership among Afghan leaders, known as mujahidin, combined with an immediate vacuum of support left by the U.S., led to a civil war between the several mujahidin armies.

This resulted in more killings, destruction, and chaos in Afghanistan. The Taliban, which was once supported by the U.S., emerged as victors and seized control of the capital, Kabul, in 1996. The Taliban almost immediately issued edicts, taking away the rights and freedom from Afghans, especially women. During this period, a total of 13 million Afghans fled the country.

FMF TAKES ACTION

In 1997, FMF launched the Stop Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan campaign demanding that the U.S. and the U.N. not recognize the Taliban as a legitimate government because of its inhumane treatment of women. We delivered hundreds of thousands of letters to then-President Clinton and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Anan.

On March 11, 1998, in recognition of International Women's Day, President Clinton and Secretary General Kofi Anan announced that neither the U.S. nor the U.N. would recognize the Taliban due to its denial of all women's rights. FMF continued its campaign and sought humanitarian help for Afghan women and girls during the 20 years of republic governance.

We have not stopped. FMF continues its advocacy for Afghan women and girls and has renewed its Stop Gender Apartheid campaign.

The Taliban must not be recognized and must be held accountable for their crimes against women and girls. It is imperative that the Gender Apartheid system must be treated as an international crime and its perpetrators must be held accountable.

Our Stop Gender Apartheid Campaign is needed now more than ever as each day Afghan women and girls are more and more restricted in their freedoms and human rights. We cannot be silent as women and girls are being denied their human rights in Afghanistan. We stand with Afghan women in their fight for dignity, respect, and equality.

TO TAKE ACTION, PLEASE VISIT WWW.STOPGENDERAPARTHEID.ORG

STOP GENDER APARTHEID IN AFGHANISTAN

Scan the QR code to sign the petition and stand with women and girls in Afghanistan!



Add your name to ask the international community to codify Gender Apartheid as a crime against humanity.



**STOP GENDER APARTHEID
IN AFGHANISTAN**
FEMINIST MAJORITY FOUNDATION