



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on Afghanistan

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OPENING REMARKS

Ms. Nada AL-NASHIF, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Deputy High Commissioner presents the report prepared by OHCHR which depicts the deterioration of the human rights situation in Afghanistan, now exacerbated by the **deep humanitarian crisis**. She seizes this opportunity to extend her condolences to all those affected by the earthquake that hit Nangarhar and Kunar provinces last week.

Since 2021, the *de facto* authorities have announced a plethora of edicts and laws that violate the human rights of the people of Afghanistan. Women and girls face extreme forms of gender-based discrimination and oppression that amount to **systematic gender persecution**. These impact every part of their lives. Their education, with girls banned from secondary education since 2021, their employment, their health, and their access to civic space and the enjoyment of freedom of expression.

The propagation of the Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law passed last year targets the autonomy in public. The *de facto* authorities have imposed **severe restrictions on civic space and media freedom** through a system characterised by censorship, intimidation



and detention. By November 2024, OHCHR monitoring revealed 256 arrests and 130 cases of torture or ill-treatment of media professionals.

The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is compounded by the **forced return of over 2 million Afghans** from neighbouring countries this year alone, particularly from Iran and Pakistan. Most returnees are practically destitute, with few assets or job prospects. As many key donor states have cut their humanitarian and development funding this year, support to returning families has fallen significantly, while sanctions and frozen state assets continue to cripple Afghanistan's economy. OHCHR urges all countries to end the forced return of Afghan refugees and to protect those at risk against *refoulement*. In the meantime, the international community must step up its support and respond to chronically underfunded humanitarian appeals.

OHCHR report also reflects on victims and survivors perspectives on **justice and redress**, building on the 2024 report that took stock of options for accountability. In interviews conducted in 2020 and 2021, the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) found that little had been done to acknowledge harm or to provide victims and survivors with reparations. Many expressed a desire for criminal prosecutions, acknowledgement and compensation.

Other processes led by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission some 20 years ago, and more recently by the International Criminal Court, yielded similar results. Civil society initiatives on victim-centred justice have faced a challenging environment due to the complex nature of the past conflict, lack of awareness of atrocities, and fear of reprisals. It is important to listen to the **voices of victims and survivors**, to understand their expectations and priorities for truth, justice and reparations.

The results of various consultation processes, as set out in the report, provide a solid starting point. What is clear is that **accountability efforts must be multidimensional** and pursued through a variety of different but complementary tracks, rather than limited to a single process or mechanism focused on criminal justice. They should apply the full array of transitional justice elements, including truth-seeking, justice, reparation, guarantees of non-recurrence and memorialisation.

At the same time, the international community needs to support the **independent investigation and prosecution of all violations** of international human rights and humanitarian law, including those committed by foreign forces during decades of conflict. These ongoing violations require action by both the *de facto* authorities and the international community. The *de facto* authorities need to take urgent action to comply with international human rights law by rescinding discriminatory laws, edicts, decrees and policies that deny human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Afghan people, especially women and girls.



They need to enable **women and girls** to access health care, secondary and university education and work, respecting their freedom of movement and ending interference in their daily lives. They need to implement a **complete moratorium on executions**, with a view to the abolition of the death penalty, and they need to end corporal punishment. They need to respect the right to freedom of expression and remove restrictions on the media.

All member states and the broader international community need to find ways to engage with and influence the *de facto* authorities to meet Afghanistan's international human rights obligations. This will require sustained efforts of **engagement through dialogue and incentives**, as well as through the pursuit of accountability. It remains crucial to find ways to meet the basic needs and the aspirations of the Afghan people in an increasingly precarious humanitarian situation.

It is only through a **comprehensive approach**, rooted in both the immediate and the longer-term needs and expectations of Afghans, that Afghanistan will achieve stability and sustainable development. The international community must work for a future Afghanistan that is at peace with itself and its neighbours, and where the human rights of all Afghans are fully respected.

STATEMENTS BY PANELLISTS

Mr. Richard BENNETT, Special Rapporteur (SR) on the Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan

Conveying his deepest sympathies to the families of those who lost their lives in the devastating earthquake and a speedy recovery for those injured, Mr. Richard BENNETT points out that his reports and those of other stakeholders such as OHCHR paint a consistent picture of the deteriorating human rights situation in Afghanistan.

Regrettably, the Taliban has not rescinded any of its gender-oppressive measures, nor the human rights restrictions affecting other groups. Since the SR last reported in June 2025, **further oppressive measures** have been imposed on the Afghan population, such as:

- The introduction of so-called *mahram cards* in some provinces further limiting women's freedom of movement.
- Reports that *madrassas education* for girls and women will be closed, albeit over time.
- A new so-called law banning poems which criticise the Taliban leader, praise romantic love and encourage relationships between men and women.
- A new directive requiring broadcasters to submit topics for advance approval and prohibiting commentators from expressing views which contradict Taliban policies.
- A clampdown on religious freedom, including forced conversions and blasphemy convictions.

The SR further notes with concern an alarming **increase in infliction of corporal punishment**. According to the *de facto* Supreme Court so far in 2025, at least 672 people, 547 men and 125



women, have been subjected to judicially sanctioned **public flogging**, more than double the figure for the same period last year. It is more than clear that Afghanistan is **not a safe place for involuntary return**. Therefore, the SR is very concerned by some states returning Afghans *en masse*, including forcibly, and others, including some farther afield, threatening to do so despite the very real risks of persecution, reprisals or violence in contravention of international customary and treaty law.

In this continually deteriorating context, the SR is deeply concerned about the creeping normalisation of the *de facto* authorities and by what, at times, seems like **framing Afghanistan as a lost cause** due to the Taliban having full control with no realistic alternatives on the horizon. Some states appear to see the pragmatic approach being to manage their own strategic security and commercial interests while trying to mitigate the excesses of this regime whose leaders have been indicted by the ICC.

Loudly and clearly, **Afghanistan is not a lost cause**. It is a test – a test of whether the world will stand firm against gender persecution. A test of whether human rights principles apply universally or only when politically convenient. A test of whether we hear the voices of Afghans, especially women, who continue to valiantly resist despite extraordinary risks. And a test of whether we are prepared to challenge the impunity that has perpetuated violence for decades. How do we stop Afghanistan from becoming a lost cause? It is by using every tool at our disposal.

This **all-tools approach** includes sustained and principled international pressure, incentives for improvement, strengthened support for civil society, expanded humanitarian assistance, international accountability, codification of gender apartheid and challenges to the Taliban's version of *sharia* by religious scholars and Muslim-majority countries, and all of this must be the centring of women's rights, voices and agency. One tool that would play an important role in ensuring accountability and deterring further violations is an **independent investigative mechanism**. Such a mechanism would be complementary to the SR's mandate, the work of UNAMA, the ICC and other efforts towards justice, truth and reparations. The gap it would fill would be to collect and preserve evidence, identify alleged perpetrators, support criminal prosecutions and contribute to other forms of accountability.

Once more, the SR presented the Council with a grim picture of the human rights situation in the country, while hoping to report more positively in the future. What is happening in Afghanistan, though serious and challenging, is **neither inevitable nor irreversible**. It is the result of challenges, by the Taliban certainly, and also by the international community, including the UNHRC. This means different choices and actions are possible. Therefore, the SR urges the UNHRC to meet the courage of Afghans with decisive and effective action at this very session.

Ms. Nahla HAIDAR, Chair, United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee)

The CEDAW Committee recently concluded its groundbreaking review of Afghanistan's Fourth Periodic Report in June 2025, the first UN Human Rights Treaty Body review since the Taliban takeover. The situation of women and girls in Afghanistan represents the **world's most severe women's rights crisis**.



Since August 2021, the *de facto* authorities have issued more than 80 restrictive measures that systematically dismantled women's human rights. These edits have created what we can only describe as an **institutionalised system of gender persecution** - one that may be considered as gender apartheid due to Afghanistan's binding obligations under CEDAW. Afghanistan ratified the Convention in 2003 without reservations, and these obligations remain in effect regardless of changes in political leadership.

The *de facto* authorities' invocation of their extremist interpretation of *sharia* law and Afghan culture cannot justify systematic discrimination against women. In July 2025, the **ICC issued arrest warrants** for Taliban Supreme Leader and Chief Justice for crime against humanity, specifically gender persecution. Additionally, Australia, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands have initiated proceedings under article 29 of CEDAW in the name of justice.

The crisis has deepened since the CEDAW review, and the recent devastating earthquakes in Afghanistan have compounded the suffering of women and girls who already face systematic exclusion. Some report that they were excluded from the rescue operation just because they are women, sincerely hoping this is not true.

The CEDAW Committee calls upon the international community to maintain **sustained diplomatic pressure through targeted sanctions**, linking any support to concrete improvements in women's rights. The Committee urges technical assistance for legal reform processes and dialogue with constitutional experts and Islamic scholars to ensure that women must refrain from normalising the current discriminatory framework and must strengthen accountability through international justice mechanisms while providing targeted support to Afghan women through independent humanitarian channels.

Furthermore, the CEDAW Committee calls upon UN agencies to continue to **amplify Afghan women's voices** and provide platforms for their participation in decision-making. Religious and traditional leaders must challenge interpretations that legitimise discrimination and promote understandings of Islam that affirm women's dignity and equal rights. The Committee also calls on UNHRC mechanisms and the Council itself to integrate recommendations from Treaty Bodies into its resolutions and establish regular dialogue with the CEDAW Committee in Afghanistan as it already happens with the Special Rapporteur.

The CEDAW Committee's **concerns transcend politics**. They are rooted in principles. They stand upon the bedrock of universal and immutable values, human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, autonomy and justice for all, most urgently for the women and girls of Afghanistan. The CEDAW Committee calls on the Council to engage with sustained action, and thereby it reaffirms its unwavering commitment to work with the UNHRC and all stakeholders to ensure that **Afghan women and girls are neither erased from public life nor abandoned in their darkest hour**.

The CEDAW's promise of equality must be fulfilled and Afghanistan's international obligation must be upheld. The Committee stands with the courageous women of Afghanistan. Their voices must not be silenced and their rights must be restored.



**H.E. Mr. Nasir Ahmad ANDISHA, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of
Afghanistan to the United Nations Office in Geneva**

The thorough OHCHR report presented by the Deputy High Commissioner documents with clarity the deliberate policies, edicts and practises of the Taliban that have created a profound and escalating human rights crisis in Afghanistan. In the light of this, the delegation of Afghanistan urges member states to urgently consult, coordinate and act.

This call is critical and demands attention first and foremost because of the **creeping normalisation and the recognition of Taliban** by a number of states, in the region particularly. In addition, a development which might have gone unnoticed on 15 August 2025 - with a mere oral order - the Taliban's Supreme Leader announced that their regime is no more caretaker or interim.

Without any due process, without any concern for legitimacy or a public support process, the Taliban have established a **fully fledged, theocratic, totalitarian regime**. Unlike some in the national community who thought that this process transition from interim to a full-fledged government might involve some reform and inclusivity, that opportunity is also lost.

The crisis goes beyond the gender persecution as alluded in the reports. It is an **entrenched, multi-layered system of oppression** that corrodes the fullest spectrum of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Girls have been excluded from secondary schools for the fourth consecutive year. The current Law on Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice entrenches these restrictions, mandating even concealment of women's rights is enforced by over 3,000 morality inspectors. As the CEDAW Committee has cautioned, this systematic erasure from the public life may constitute **gender apartheid**.

As also alluded by the High Commissioner in his this morning statement, that four years after the Taliban returned to power, the Taliban has forced and included those **forcibly deported** from the neighbouring countries of Iran, Pakistan, Türkiye and the others and enforced disappearances, torture and extrajudicial executions have become routine. Public execution and corporal punishment presents freedom of expression is crashed with journalists detained, tortured and silenced. **Religious and ethnic minorities**, especially the Azara Shias community remain target of systematic attack at their places of worship and institutionalised oppression and their suffering must not be overlooked.

The economic and social fabric has collapsed. **Poverty worsens** under the Taliban rule and was intensified by displacement, national disaster and dismantling of public services. The country is living through one of the world's most severe humanitarian crisis made even more unbearable by the recent earthquakes.

Today, more than half of the population is displaced and institutionalised by the Taliban to dismantle civic life, erase women and minorities and entrench unaccountable power. OHCHR report confirms that Afghanistan faces a **total human rights crisis**. To restore dignity and protect the lives of Afghanistan, the UNHRC and all members must act with a holistic, firm and collective response.



Ms. Mariam SAFI, Researcher and Founder, Organisation for Policy, Research and Development Studies (DROPS)

Since the Taliban's takeover, DROPS has surveyed over 69,000 women and held focus groups with 4,000 participants. Across every issue - be it justice, education, work or aid - the message is the same. The message is the authoritarian rule which they sustain through cohesion, detention and repression that Afghan women and girls endure daily.

Across Afghanistan, **women's testimonies** expose systemic violations under the Taliban's Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law (PVPV Law). Since the implementation of the latter, women have described harsher restrictions on mobility, primary education, work and healthcare. In Bamiyan, one woman shared - 'they first warn, then threaten, then beat you. And women disobey.' As one woman in Bagh explained, men follow these rules not because they believe in them, but because they are scared of being shamed or imprisoned.

Now nowhere is this more evident than in the justice sector. DROPS asked 6,500 women in 33 provinces what issues do women seek legal services for and the response was shattering - **45% answered domestic violence and abuse**. The rise in domestic violence is fuelled by the Taliban's system of gender apartheid, the Taliban insist their justice system is free of corruption, but women tell us otherwise.

Only 4% of those surveyed saw any improvement in **access to legal services**. Most said they turn to local dispute mechanisms or existing civil society legal aid networks, while just 23% rely on **Taliban courts**, which women describe as humiliating, deeply exclusionary and rife with harassment. One focus group participant from Herat explained, even with a video of rape, the court demands witnesses from the women. In Dahar, another recounted victim said - 'you should have been killed before coming here.' For the few women who risk approaching the courts, they face yet another wall of obstacles, namely the PVPV Law, the morality police, the *mahram* requirement, and in many areas, the absence of functioning institutions altogether.

DROPS found that women are now overwhelmingly turning to family elders, then to *jirgas* or *shuras* to resolve these issues, but testimonies explain that these are not places of justice, but of necessity. As one participant put it - 'we are first forced to choose where we want to live.' Today, despite shrinking civic spaces, some organisations operate clandestinely. They are beacons of hope, and they need sustained support. These accounts point to a fundamental **denial of due process and equal protection**. Poverty and unemployment exasperate these conditions, driving families to force daughters into early marriage, and reinforcing economic dependence.

Policy responses must therefore focus not only on restoring credible legal support structures within Afghanistan, but also on establishing an independent international accountability mechanism for Afghanistan, mandated to investigate violations, preserve evidence, and advance accountability. This is the call of 108 Afghan regional and international human rights organisations. In addition, while civic space has shrunk, Afghan report that some **civil society still operate**. These groups are a vital lifeline, and they must be preserved. Afghan women are not silent, and in October 2025, a coalition of Afghan civil society organisations made it very clear, and their message is urgent. Without justice, without restoring their rights, there can be no governance. It is the responsibility of the UNHRC to ensure they are heard and acted upon.



Ms. Zubaida AKBAR, Afghanistan Programme Manager, FEMENA

Exactly as so many of her colleagues present, Ms. Zubaida AKBAR stands before the UNHRC with almost no faith left in the institution. Afghan women feel like broken records in the UNHRC. Every session, they repeat the same truths, the escalating and horrendous violations. FEMENA has documented **131 edicts** issued by the Taliban since their takeover, all designed to **erase women and girls from the society**. Which other country on earth imposes a blanket ban on girls' education? What other country denies women healthcare if they do not have a male chaperone? What other country bans windows with a view on women? Afghan women and girls are being suffocated, their futures stolen, while the international community is treated as rebellion.

The **impact of these edicts** goes far beyond restriction. Afghan women face a mental health crisis, depression, continuous trauma, and suicidal thoughts by the complete erasure of their autonomy. Early and forced marriages have surged, and girls are pushed into domestic roles. Women are denied opportunities to work or participate in society, leaving them isolated and trapped. These are not abstract consequences, they are the real **daily toll of systematic oppression**. There have been hundreds of stoning and night interrogations. Some of them were imprisoned with their children, denied food and fresh air.

Hazara women face escalated abuse targeted for both gender and ethnicity. These are not isolated incidents, but deliberate tools of state terror. The suffering does not fall on women alone. While they are most impacted, **marginalised ethnic and religious groups**, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Sikhs are persecuted, displaced, and dispossessed. The Taliban have explicitly threatened to execute LGBTQ+ individuals, but this struggle cannot and must not be carried on their shoulders alone while the world shifting towards normalisation with the Taliban.

Time and again, the UNHRC has failed to take a strong and unified stand against oppression. The Council's double standards are impossible to ignore. From **gender apartheid** in Afghanistan to the ongoing **genocide in Gaza**, the world has responded with selective outrage, selective protection, and inaction while Afghan lives are destroyed. The persecution of Afghan women is a human rights crisis.

The Council must **reject recognition or normalisation** of the Taliban. Until all decrees violating women's rights are revoked, there can be no seat at the UN and no legitimacy anywhere. Recognition under these conditions entrenches oppression. The Council must pursue accountability through international law. Delegations must push their governments to support ICC and ICJ mechanisms to hold Taliban leaders responsible for crimes against humanity and systematic gender persecution. They must urgently push for the establishment of an independent investigative mechanism to complement the mandate and lifeline for girls' future.

Inclusive peace must be guaranteed. Afghan women, minorities, youth, and civil society must be represented in all forums shaping the country's future. Exclusion is illegitimate, and the last Doha meeting where women were deliberately excluded to appease the Taliban was a shameful betrayal of UN principles. Afghan women are not asking for sympathy or charity. They are demanding justice, accountability, and recognition of our full humanity.



REPLIES AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Ms. Zubaida AKBAR reiterates that Afghan women have not stopped resisting. Every day, in protests in underground schools and hidden community spaces, they are standing up to Taliban's brutality. They are risking their lives for freedom, for education, for dignity. They are proving that Afghanistan is not a lost cause. If Afghan women refuse to give up, how dare the world give up on them? This is not the time for **empty statements or cautious diplomacy**. This is the time for action. The Taliban is not a government, but a terrorist group unwilling and incapable of governance, and in total defiance of every human rights principle we claim to uphold. To normalise them is to become Afghan women and everything you stand for. The UNHRC must stand with Afghan women as their partners in shaping Afghanistan's future, and she warns – 'Do not sideline us. Do not silence us. The women of Afghanistan are showing more bravery than most governments.' They are demanding accountability when the world looks away. Afghan women are carrying a vision for an inclusive, forward-looking Afghanistan while the Taliban drags the country backwards. If **Afghan women are prepared to risk everything**, then the least that the international community can do is fund their community-based civic activities and amplify their demands. Governments can offer them protection from Taliban's targeted attacks and refuse to hand their future to a group that has already destroyed so much.

Ms. Mariam SAFI, in reply to questions on accountability for Taliban crimes and ensuring women's participation in all discussions on Afghanistan, addresses the following recommendations to the Council.

First of all, Afghanistan cannot wait. The Council must heed the call from civil society and **establish an independent investigative mechanism** without delay. Such a body would coordinate evidence-gathering, strengthen accountability, and bring Afghans closer to justice.

Second, Canada, Germany, Australia, and Netherlands announced in September 2024 **ICJ proceedings against Afghanistan** for CEDAW violations, which was a groundbreaking step. But this action must not fade to the background. States must press for transparency, follow-through, and the inclusion of Afghan women and civil society in every stage of this process. Support for the codification and the prosecution of gender apartheid as a crime under international law is a must.

Third, Afghan women are living proof of how systematic subjugation can be weaponised against half of the population. Rhetoric must match with action. The resilience of Afghan women is the strongest challenge to the Taliban's totalitarian vision, yet they remain underfunded and under-supported. The international community must **increase its direct funding for Afghan women and civil society organisations** operating in the country, which includes frontline defenders of democracy and human rights.

Cognizant of the fact that global crises are multiplying, attention is divided, and domestic pressures are very high, Ms. Mariam SAFI warns that the Taliban have a hundred-year plan, while the international community has a six-month plan at best. Without strategic and collective action, the international community risks losing more than Afghanistan. We risk losing the global fight against authoritarianism, and we risk accelerating the current rollback in human rights and women's rights that we are witnessing worldwide.



H.E. Mr. Nasir Ahmad ANDISHA calls upon the Council must recognise the current crisis is the latest phase in a decade-long cycle of impunity compounded by the Taliban's radical ideology and sustained disregard for human dignity. Each failure to ensure accountability has fuelled new cycles of repression, atrocity, crimes, and human rights abuses. For Afghanistan, lasting peace and genuine reconciliation will remain impossible unless justice is addressed holistically, and Afghanistan has already experienced this post-9/11. Regardless of the parties to the conflict or their affiliation, **justice needs to be delivered**. Just days ago, the largest coalition of over 100 Afghanistan's national and international civil society organisations issued an open letter to the UNHRC calling for the establishment of an independent investigative mechanism for Afghanistan. This demand must not be ignored. On behalf of the people of Afghanistan, the delegation in Geneva calls upon the UNHRC to act decisively as follows:

- Establish a dedicated independent investigative and accountability mechanism for Afghanistan mandated to investigate, collect, preserve evidence of crime committed by all parties past and present.
- Ensure support for the victim-centred and intersectional initiatives, thereby making sure that the voices of survivors are at the core of accountability process.
- Provide SR Richard Bennett with the enablers to continue this important mandate, expressing appreciation for the tireless and effective work carried out by him and his team.

In closing, the Permanent Representative recalls that the people of Afghanistan cannot afford another cycle of violence. Justice and accountability are not optional. They are the only path to restoring dignity, preventing recurrence, and building a future free of operations.

Ms. Nahla HAIDAR warns about a mechanism that would take time first to be constituted, then to be effective. Given that the urgency does not allow to wait until a mechanism is set in place to act, Ms. Nahla HAIDAR suggests to look at what we have - an all-tools approach such as CEDAW concluding observations emerging from the recent dialogue with Afghanistan. Concluding observations offer a menu of recommendations that are very substantive and addressed to all stakeholders - not only to *the de facto* authorities, but also to the international community. Looking at bilateral assistance that continues to flow into Afghanistan, Ms. Nahla HAIDAR questions how much of it makes the link between their support to concrete improvements in women's rights. One of the tools to resort to is **conditionality of aid** and exerting pressure. There is also the **Doha process** which should be used to impose the participation of women. She also stresses the role played by the OIC in bringing all the experience of other countries that are managed under Islamic law and the status of women. Ms. Nahla HAIDAR believes that many linkages are missing, bilateral assistance should be much more linked to the improvement of the status of women. Any forum for dialogue with the Taliban should include women from within Afghanistan and hopefully from the diaspora one day. Support for society organizations must continue as they are the **lifeline for Afghan women**. They deserve more in terms of financial assistance and protection, as well as the UN. While the latter is doing a great job on the ground, it needs 'coming together internally', as the UN efforts seem slightly scattered. In closing, Ms. Nahla HAIDAR suggests **putting the CEDAW at the centre of this process** with its concluding observations as a genuine tool to call on Afghanistan to abide by its obligations.



Mr. Richard BENNETT, in reply to questions on what can be done to challenge Taliban's policies and ensure accountability, stresses first of all the need to support his mandate as SR, and most importantly, support the people of Afghanistan. Before turning to substantive replies and remarks, Mr. Richard BENNETT evokes some challenges that UNHRC Special Procedures are currently facing. First, he denounces the **US Government's sanctions on Ms. Francesca Albanese**, SR on the occupied Palestinian territories. Mr. Richard BENNETT states that sanctioning a Special Rapporteur appointed by the UNHRC violates international law and is a direct attack on the integrity of the UN human rights system, including UNHRC Special Procedures. Turning to his mandate, the SR regrets being compelled to report once again that he is **unable to fulfil his full responsibilities due to lack of resources**. Despite the Council's repeated adoption of resolutions increasing resources in the context of the liquidity crisis, the support the SR receives is no different than when he took up this mandate three years ago. While continuing to discharge his mandate to the best of his ability, its full potential has not and cannot be realised in the current situation.

Many interventions have rightly expressed concern about the situation in Afghanistan. However, four years after the Taliban regime seized power, statements of concern are not enough. Alone, they will not improve the situation nor counter the **growing frustration and dismay** the SR increasingly hears from Afghans inside the country and in exile. More than words, they need action. This includes **greater support for civil society** and particularly women-led organisations. States should commit to long-term funding of organisations working on many issues, including human rights documentation, protection, humanitarian assistance, education, particularly for women and girls, health service delivery, legal assistance, demining, those working in the media and the arts.

As no single action will resolve the crisis, an all-tools approach is needed. However, accountability is and must be a central part of the strategy. While it cannot erase the past, it can help chart a new future drawn by the people of Afghanistan. For this to happen, the UNHRC must take action at this session and establish an independent and complementary investigative mechanism. The people of Afghanistan's determination is **the compass which will lead to justice and dignity**. Through their courage, they are already leading the way. The international community has the moral imperative to stand by them, not just in words, but also in deeds.

Ms. Nada AL-NASHIF stresses that OHCHR continues to advocate for a comprehensive approach that combines sustained monitoring and reporting, engagement with the authorities through dialogue, as well as the pursuit of accountability through both judicial and nonjudicial measures. As depicted by the panellists, the human rights situation in Afghanistan is complex and requires not only an **all-tools approach** as suggested by the SR, but also an **all-actor approach**. The international community must work to fulfil the economic, social, and cultural rights of all Afghans through the forms of assistance that can support humanitarian needs and material living conditions on the ground without discrimination or exclusion. There is also a need to find ways to support the crucial work of civil society organisations and others that are striving to create space for women and girls, minorities, and other groups facing severe discrimination.

Independent mechanisms, such as those created for the situations of Syria and Myanmar, as well as **investigative bodies**, such as commissions of enquiry and fact-finding missions, can and do



play an important supportive function in ensuring that perpetrators are held to account. They can ensure that evidence is gathered and preserved in accordance with international standards, ensuring that this information is not lost or destroyed and remains available for use in future accountability processes. However, it is well-known that the **path to justice and international accountability can be long** and does not yield immediate results for victims and survivors who have very pressing, urgent needs. Any further mechanism is ultimately a question for UNHRC members. Given the extensive nature of the violations and the abuses, OHCHR agrees this has to be well resourced and properly equipped. This will need to be carefully evaluated in light of the currently **constrained resources** and the need to ensure **full complementarity with existing mechanisms**. Despite the challenging situation, Ms. Nada AL-NASHIF reassures that OHCHR will continue its work on the ground through UNAMA's human rights department by carrying out monitoring and documentation of a range of human rights violations, including on the rights of women and girls; engaging with the *de facto* authorities on these issues through, for instance, meeting with the *de facto* security agencies on individual cases of violations, accessing prisons to meet detainees; and publishing public reports. This international human rights monitoring presence on the ground is crucial. OHCHR remains committed to pursuing and upholding human rights protection and accountability for the people of Afghanistan.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Views Expressed by State Delegations

Albania praises the SR's work and OHCHR's continued support to monitor and report on human rights situation under extremely challenging circumstances. Since the Taliban takeover, the situation in the country is deteriorating rapidly. The Taliban has institutionalised a system of gender apartheid, denying women and girls access in the public life. These policies are codified and enforced with cruelty. The persecution extended beyond gender, ethnic and religious minorities are facing exclusion and repression. Human rights defenders, journalists, artists, and former officials are subject of torture, arbitrary detention, extortion and execution. Afghanistan's independent legal system has collapsed, replaced by arbitrary edicts. Justice is virtually non-existent. Albania stands firmly with people of Afghanistan and rejects any kind of normalisation with Taliban in absence of measurable progress of human rights. To conclude, Albania reiterates its support for international efforts that aim to ensure accountability in Afghanistan.

Australia reiterates its call for the Taliban to grant the Special Rapporteur full and unfettered access and condemns the Taliban's targeting of women and girls, ethnic and religious minorities, LGBTQI+ persons, and civil society actors. Australia remains deeply concerned by the dire human rights crisis in Afghanistan, particularly the institutionalised discrimination and oppression of women and girls. The Taliban is seeking to erase women and girls from Afghan public life and deny them their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Restrictions on women's and girls' access to education, work, health care, and legal protection violate international law and deny dignity and self-determination. The Taliban has also weaponised Afghanistan's justice system, entrenching gender-based discrimination in law, policy, and practise, and interfering in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those most in need. In closing, Australia's thoughts are with the people of Afghanistan following the recent devastating earthquakes. All recovery efforts must be inclusive and not compound any human rights abuses.



Austria remains deeply concerned about the ongoing human rights violations and abuses in Afghanistan, the deteriorating situation, particularly affecting women, girls, minorities, journalists, and human rights defenders, continues to be alarming. There is an urgent need for robust monitoring and reporting to document violations as a step towards accountability. Austria strongly supports the ICC and welcomes the issuance of recent arrest warrants for individuals responsible for serious international crimes in Afghanistan. Accountability for perpetrators of atrocity crimes, including gender-based crimes, torture, and extrajudicial killings is essential to justice and deterrence. Austria reiterates its call on the *de facto* authorities to abide by Afghanistan's international human rights obligations, including under the CEDAW, and to uphold the principles of non-discrimination and the rule of law. A year has passed since the introduction of the PVPV Law, which further institutionalised the systemic gender oppression.

Belgium notes with concern that during the four long years since the Taliban took over, the *de facto* authorities enforced an institutionalised system of gender oppression, discrimination, and human rights violations. Four long years, especially for Afghan women and girls who saw themselves, their rights, and their future erased from Afghan society. But also four long years for men and boys instrumentalised in a state-sanctioned system of discrimination, punished when showing solidarity with women and girls, and harmed through a radicalised education system. Belgium condemns the Taliban's ongoing gross, widespread, and systematic human rights abuses and call for accountability of those who are responsible. The situation in Afghanistan is a litmus test for international commitments, notably on gender equality and on accountability. There can be no normalisation with the *de facto* authorities unless and until there is demonstrated, measurable, and independently verified progress against human rights benchmark, particularly for women and girls.

Bulgaria expresses its condolences to the people of Afghanistan on the consequences of the recent devastating earthquake, aggravated by the Taliban's discriminatory policies. Bulgaria remains deeply alarmed by the widespread and systematic human rights violations and abuses in Afghanistan, especially against women and girls. Bulgaria further remains deeply concerned over the restrictive policies, practises and legal measures of the *de facto* authorities which deny women their human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to education, work, health, freedom of movement and speech. Bulgaria joins others in condemning the systematic and systemic violations and abuses against women, which may amount to persecution on the grounds of gender, a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute. Therefore, Bulgaria calls upon the *de facto* authorities to take immediate action and abide by the international obligations, including those under the CEDAW and the CRC. Concerned over restrictions imposed on civic space and media freedoms, Bulgaria calls on the *de facto* authorities to guarantee the enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all citizens of Afghanistan.

Canada extends its heartfelt condolences to those affected by the recent earthquake and explains it has provided \$3 million in humanitarian aid, in addition to the \$36 million already allocated in 2025. Since 2021, Canada has been observing with great concern the inspiration of systemic gender-based oppression imposed by the Taliban. The exclusion of girls and women from education, public life, and other spheres is a gross violation of their fundamental rights. The earthquake has made bear the tragic consequences of these restrictions. There is a lack of trained medical staff and women staff, and so Afghan people have been deprived of emergency



care, placing their health at stake. Canada expresses its solidarity vis-à-vis the Afghan people, especially women and girls, in their efforts to achieve justice and ensure that human rights are upheld and inclusive government and to combat terrorism. For these reasons, Canada holds Afghanistan to account regarding its obligations under the CEDAW.

Chile expresses its deepest solidarity with the people of Afghanistan following the recent earthquake, a disaster which has further exacerbated the difficult humanitarian situation and human rights situation affecting millions of people in the country. Today we are speaking of an Afghanistan with a human face, the face of the girls who are forced to hide their workbooks because learning has become a crime, the face of women who plough on in the long shadow of chastisement every day, and the face of the families who, following the earthquake, are searching among the rubble in silence, deprived of the public voice of their mothers and girls. One cannot let the exclusion of women and girls to become normalised or a cultural reality. This is a deliberate strategy to erase them from the social fabric, and that is persecution on grounds of gender, a crime under international law. In the face of this, the response of the international community should be proportionate to the gravity of the facts. Chile considers that it is urgent to move ahead on an accountability mechanism that is not just a symbolic gesture but a specific tool that will preserve evidence, support victims, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice. Such a step would also send a signal of hope to millions of Afghan girls and women who, even in the worst adversity, are keeping their dignity and their right to a different future alive.

Croatia extends its deepest sympathies to the people of Afghanistan hit by the devastating earthquake on 2 September. Noting the continued deterioration of human rights in Afghanistan, intensified by the economic crisis, persistent unemployment, and scaling down of foreign aid, Croatia strongly condemns gender policies that amount to a form of systematic gender persecution. The persecution of women and girls through the edicts and laws by the *de facto* authorities is particularly alarming. Croatia calls for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, including public executions, as well as cessation of reported arrests and detentions, physical beatings, and other punishments not complying with the law on the propagation of virtue and prevention advice. It supports OHCHR's call on the *de facto* authorities to adhere to international standards and the human rights obligations that Afghanistan is bound by, and to rescind all laws, edicts, and decrees that deny human rights of the Afghan population. Enabling access to secondary and tertiary education and work for all women and girls would be an important first step in this direction.

Czechia strongly condemns the Taliban's rule and treatment of the Afghan people, especially the systemic discrimination of women and girls. The blatant human rights violations must end now. Girls must be allowed to attend school, women permitted to work, and all individuals to enjoy basic freedoms, including expression, religion, and movement, as well as the right to public participation and access to health care. The persecution of minorities, torture, and extrajudicial killings must cease. The reform of Afghanistan's legal and justice system is essential to uphold human rights in line with international obligations. Czechia urges the Taliban to ensure accountability, justice, and free and fair democratic elections. Czechia supports the vital work of the OHCHR, the SR, and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and calls for their full access to the country.



France stands in solidarity with the Afghan people and continues to support the population through our humanitarian action. Four years on from the Taliban's coming to power by force in Afghanistan, the human rights situation continues to deteriorate. France is using all the levers and its availability in cooperation with the UN and civil society to improve the situation for the Afghan people. Women and girls in particular are the victims of a policy of segregation which excludes them from public, political and economic life. Recalling that gender-based persecution is a crime against humanity, France urges the Taliban to immediately remove all the restrictions placed on women and girls. Stressing once more its opposition to the death penalty in all places and all circumstances, France condemns all public executions. In closing, France commends the work of the SR and supports the renewal of his mandate. Creating an investigative mechanism would be a major complementary step for combating impunity and supporting victims.

Germany states that OHCHR's report confirms the downward spiral of the human rights situation under the Taliban. All people in Afghanistan are facing appalling violations of their rights. But women and girls face the brunt of restrictions and repression, which may amount to crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute. The systemic and institutional discrimination of women and girls in Afghanistan is unacceptable. Germany continues to call for increased efforts to ensure that those who are responsible for rights violations are held accountable. Afghanistan has ratified CEDAW in 2003 without reservations. This means that the state is obliged to fulfil CEDAW obligations. Together with partners, Germany is committed to actively pursuing our initiative to address systematic violations of CEDAW. Germany reiterates its unwavering support to the people of Afghanistan. Standing in solidarity with those affected by the recent earthquakes, Germany, in order to respond to urgent humanitarian needs, has made available 2.5 million euros for the earthquake response by the UN and international NGO partners, in addition to 5.8 million euros for assistance already committed last month.

Indonesia shares its concerns regarding the findings of the OHCHR's recent report, particularly the continuing restrictions on women and girls' rights to education, work and participation in public life. Such measures not only erode fundamental freedoms and dignity of all Afghan people, but also risk Afghanistan's future economic prospects and stability. Indonesia reaffirms that Afghanistan remains bound by its obligations under international human rights law. At the same time, the international community also carries a responsibility to assist and to prioritise constructive cooperation. For Indonesia, only an incremental yet sustained transition can lead to lasting stability, and thus the country reaffirms its support for a peace process that is Afghan-led and Afghan-owned. Safeguarding the rights of women and girls remains essential, including their meaningful participation in reconciliation efforts. In line with these commitments, Indonesia has advanced concrete initiatives, including providing scholarships for Afghan women students, supporting a psychosocial project for 400 women, and developing an Islamic microfinance model to empower livelihoods.

Ireland condemns the abhorrent situation facing women and girls due to the Taliban's decrees and expresses its utmost concern over the ongoing humanitarian and human rights crisis, which are most severely felt by women and girls and have been compounded by the recent return of over two million refugees. Ireland is appalled by the Taliban's continued undermining of women and girls' participation in society. The Taliban decrees limit the access of women and girls to education, including medical education, as well as to employment, health care and justice. This



may amount to gender persecution, a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute, and Ireland calls for full accountability of those who are responsible. The Taliban's ongoing erosion of human rights in Afghanistan is wholly unacceptable. This includes the targeting of marginalised communities, including the Hazaras and members of the LGBTIQ+ community. Ireland reiterates its calls on the Taliban to stop this discrimination and to uphold human rights of all Afghans, including the rights enshrined in the CRC and CEDAW, to which Afghanistan is a state party.

Italy renews its solidarity with the Afghan people after the recent earthquake that tragically hit the country. Four years after the Taliban's takeover, the human rights situation in Afghanistan has sharply deteriorated. The *de facto* authorities continue to impose significant restrictions, such as the law on the propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice and the latest edicts. The growing repression resulting from their enforcement severely undermines fundamental rights and freedoms, in particular of women and girls. Religious minorities remain exposed to discrimination and violence, while media and civil society organisations face increasing constraints and intimidation. The international community and the UNHRC must remain fully engaged in addressing the human rights situation in Afghanistan. Such violations are unacceptable and call for a strong and coordinated response. Italy remains committed to supporting the Afghan people in the realisation of their rights and justice, and recalls that Afghanistan must uphold its obligations under international law, as also foreseen within the framework of the so-called Doha process.

Kuwait extends its sincere condolences to the families of the victims and the injured and to the friendly Afghan people following the earthquake that hit Afghanistan. Depicting OHCHR report as deeply concerning, Kuwait remains committed to supporting the Afghan people through various humanitarian and development initiatives, such as providing direct assistance and in cooperation with the UN civil society organisations, especially in light of the economic and humanitarian challenges facing the Afghan population. Kuwait appreciates the mediation played by the state of Qatar to open channels of dialogue and to facilitate international communication by hosting negotiations between the Afghan parties. To conclude, Kuwait will continue to provide support and will continue to work with international partners to promote peace, security, and human rights for all.

Liechtenstein notes with concern that the Taliban's authoritarian rule continues to crush dissent, oppress women and girls, and censor civil society and independent media. The situation of women and girls in Afghanistan is particularly appalling. The ban of education for women and girls must immediately be lifted, as it drops them off their future. Liechtenstein urges the Taliban to abolish the PVPV Law. Wide-ranging human rights violations are part of day-to-day life in Afghanistan, with a disturbing increase in public executions, arbitrary arrests, and detention, and the deliberate destruction of civil space. The perpetrators must be held accountable. Arrest warrants for two senior Taliban leaders issued by the ICC are a welcome step. Afghanistan continues to be bound by its obligations under international law, and the *de facto* authorities remain accountable for their crimes and violations. But unfortunately, impunity prevails. The international community and the UNHRC have an obligation to not only address the situation in Afghanistan, but to do their utmost to close the accountability gap.



Luxembourg stands with the people of Afghanistan and the Afghan women and girls continue to be victims of gender-based, systemic gender-based persecution. In a society in which Afghan women do not feel safe anymore in their own households, it is the responsibility of the international community to act. Luxembourg supports the creation of an accountability mechanism encompassing the documentation and preservation of evidence showing the sufferings endured today so that justice can be served, hopefully, in a future that is not too far away. There cannot be justice without inclusive justice involving all of the survivors without discrimination. Despite the fact that resources are unfortunately limited, there are issues on which we can not save money. This is a matter of credibility for the UNHRC and its action in the fight against impunity.

Malaysia notes with concern the continued restrictions that limit the rights and freedoms of Afghans, especially in access to education, employment, and participation in public life. It is important that all Afghans, including women and girls, are able to contribute meaningfully to society in a manner consistent with Afghanistan's international commitments and the values of dignity and knowledge upheld in Islam. With the firm belief that the stability and future of Afghanistan depend on the meaningful inclusion of all Afghans, Malaysia stresses the importance of safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance as millions continue to face severe challenges. In this regard, Malaysia remains committed to supporting Afghanistan through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme. These include providing scholarships and training for Afghan women, as well as humanitarian assistance to strengthen health and maternity services. Malaysia believes that through constructive dialogue, cooperation, and targeted support, the international community can help Afghanistan move towards a future of dignity, inclusivity, and peace.

Malta reiterates its strong support for the SR and all other UN structures and mechanisms assisting Afghanistan. Malta remains gravely concerned about the worsening human rights situation in Afghanistan. The policies and practises of the *de facto* authorities have created a deeply entrenched system that undermines the rights of women and girls, resulting in widespread and systematic violations. Newly enacted edicts have further entrenched this system of discrimination. Women have been prohibited from speaking in public, denied access to healthcare and without a male guardian, and subjected to increasingly restrictive dress codes. Girls remain barred from secondary and higher education, and women face severe restrictions on employment, stripping half the population of their most basic rights. Malta urges the *de facto* authorities to take immediate steps towards dismantling the system of gender-based discrimination and to align their action with Afghanistan's international obligations.

Montenegro highlights OHCHR's mapping report showing the group's ideologically repressive and misogynistic governance. Since the Taliban's takeover, the human rights situation has drastically deteriorated, with women and girls burning the blunt of their suppression. They face a relentless gender-based discrimination and restriction on their fundamental rights, effectively becoming faceless and voiceless shadows in their own country. These Taliban sections against more than half of its population signify the liberate and systematic campaign of gender persecution, a crime against humanity, also characterised as gender apartheid. Other groups are also experiencing serious human rights violations, including religious and ethnic minorities and marginalised communities. Civic space and media freedom are being increasingly restricted by



the public's execution of the death penalty and the use of corporate punishment have also risen. The Taliban regime's actions graciously violate Afghanistan's obligations under international human rights law, showing a blatant disregard for fundamental rights and a just rules-based order. Accountability for gross human rights violations and serious abuses of OHL is vital for achieving sustainable peace, development and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Montenegro reiterates its support for the mandates of UN mechanisms for monitoring, investigating and documenting the human rights situation in Afghanistan.

Netherlands appreciates the work of the SR which it describes as crucial for documenting the daily suffering of millions of Afghans. The recent devastating earthquake adds to this suffering. The Netherlands remains deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Afghanistan, especially for women and girls who have been stripped of their fundamental rights. The Taliban's policies and practises of gross and systemic discrimination of women and girls by excluding them from education, healthcare, and public life have severe implications for their future and that of Afghanistan. This should not be left without consequence. Afghanistan must comply with its international obligations, including under CEDAW. The Netherlands remains deeply concerned about the persistent lack of accountability for human rights violations. The international community must remain united in ensuring accountability and UNHRC members must support any efforts in this regard.

New Zealand expresses its condolences to the people of Afghanistan for the devastating earthquake early September 2025. OHCHR's latest report paints once more an alarming picture of the human rights situation in Afghanistan, one that continues to demand global attention and condemnation. For this reason, New Zealand strongly supports the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and his crucial work in ensuring accountability for human rights violations and abuses. New Zealand remains gravely concerned by the ongoing systematic progression of fundamental freedoms for the people of Afghanistan, particularly the severe repression of women's and girls' rights. The Taliban must fundamentally change its approach on human rights and must comply fully with Afghanistan's obligations under international human rights law. Women and girls must be allowed access to secondary and tertiary education and their freedom of movement must be respected and they must be allowed to participate fully in public life without interference and harassment. The Taliban must rescind all edicts and decrees that curtail these fundamental freedoms and human rights. New Zealand continues to stand with the brave people of Afghanistan.

North Macedonia praises the work of the SR and his tireless efforts in documenting the deteriorating human rights situation in Afghanistan. The latest mapping report makes clear that the Taliban's edicts and practises are not isolated measures but a systematic dismantling of rights protections. Women and girls are erased from education, employment and public life. Minorities face harassment and exclusion. Civil society voices are silenced. These edicts imposed without legitimacy do not constitute laws. They are instruments of repression. Their cumulative impact amounts to institutionalised gender persecution and may rise to the level of crimes against humanity. North Macedonia calls upon the UNHRC and countries to ensure accountability by strengthening support for documentation of violations, by exploring avenues for justice, including universal jurisdiction, and by amplifying the voices of Afghan women, victims and survivors in all processes that concern them. The international community must not



normalise or recognise policies that deny half of the population its most basic rights. Afghan women and men have not given up their aspiration for freedom and dignity. Neither should we.

Pakistan on behalf of the OIC group reiterates its deep concern over the humanitarian, human rights and socioeconomic conditions in Afghanistan. In particular, the OIC group remains gravely concerned regarding the situation of human rights of women and girls in Afghanistan. Islamic teachings are crystal clear. There can be no justification for such discriminatory practises. In this light, the OIC reiterates its position and urges the *de facto* Afghan authorities to safeguard the rights of all Afghans, especially women and girls' rights to education and participation in the workforce. The group also underscores Afghanistan's responsibility to protect persons belonging to ethnic, religious and cultural minorities as enshrined in the Islamic law and its obligations under the international human rights law. The OIC group agrees with concern raised by OHCHR on the continuously diminishing funding and commitment of the international community, which drastically risks the well-being of millions in Afghanistan. Stepping up the much needed humanitarian assistance, especially to protect the most vulnerable by all stakeholders, is imperative. While reaffirming its solidarity with the Afghan people, the OIC group stresses that the use of Afghanistan's soil for terrorism undermines the human rights of not only those living in Afghanistan but all those affected beyond its borders.

Pakistan reiterates its deep concern over the humanitarian crisis and the ongoing human rights violations in the country, thereby emphasizing the importance of promoting and protecting human rights of all, particularly women and girls. Pakistan is gravely concerned by the discriminatory exclusion from education and the workforce. Based on an unequivocal position grounded in Islamic teachings and international law, Pakistan believes that the entire government in Afghanistan must fulfil their international obligations. For decades, the brotherly people of Afghanistan have been hosted by Pakistanis with open arms. The level of hospitality and warmth cannot be matched by any other country. However, Pakistan, like any other sovereign state, has the right and the duty to regulate its borders. Any Afghan who wants to visit can do so by getting a valid visa. Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan - Fitna Al-Khawarij continue to target innocent civilians in Pakistan, which constitutes a direct threaten to Pakistan citizens and undermines their human rights. Terrorist activities emerging from within Afghanistan remain a serious challenge to Pakistan and the wider region. Therefore, Pakistan calls upon the Afghan *de facto* government to uphold their obligations under international law and the Doha Agreement. Lasting stability and peace in Afghanistan are vital for the security and prosperity of the wider region.

Poland is deeply concerned by the deteriorating state of human rights in Afghanistan. The repeated calls of the international community to the Taliban are being ignored and the discriminatory policies and practises continue, depriving the people of Afghanistan of their inherent rights. Women and girls are in a particularly difficult situation, being subjected to the measures that restrict their freedom of movement, ability to work, and to receive necessary education, effectively removing them from their social life. The civic space and media freedom shrink, while the journalists and human rights defenders continue to be arbitrarily arrested and detained. Poland joins other member states in their appeal to the Taliban to follow the recommendations contained in the report of the office to fully comply with the international obligations of Afghanistan and to abide by the international human rights law.



Qatar states that Afghanistan is facing numerous challenges that have an impact on the promotion of human rights, the economic crisis, an increase in humanitarian needs, climate-related problems, as well as sanctions and freezing of resources, and the return of thousands of refugees. In order to face these challenges, the international community should continue to support efforts aimed at rebuilding Afghan institutions. Qatar must also keep the door to dialogue open with all parties in Afghanistan in order to ensure peace in Afghanistan and in order to guarantee the return of this community into the international community. As a meaningful partner for Afghanistan, Qatar has provided mediation support and has also supported meetings of Special Envoys. Beyond providing development aid, Qatar has sent five airplanes with five tonnes of humanitarian aid in order to ease the suffering of the Afghan people after the earthquake.

The **Republic of Korea** remains deeply concerned that four years after the Taliban seized power, the people of Afghanistan, especially women and girls, continue to face relentless violations of their fundamental rights and freedoms. Korea is particularly alarmed that severe restrictions on the rights of women and girls remain in place, affecting their access to education, work, freedom of movement, and participation of public and cultural life. The enforcement of so-called laws and decrees coupled with arbitrary arrest and restrictions on civic space further entrenches systematic discrimination. Korea once again calls on the Taliban to reverse these policies and uphold their obligations under international law. Moreover, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has been further aggravated by earthquakes and the involuntary return of vulnerable individuals, many of whom face serious human rights violations. The Republic of Korea stands in solidarity with the Afghan people and reaffirms its commitment to working with the international community to protect and promote their human rights.

Romania remains deeply alarmed by the continued and deliberate dismantling of fundamental rights in Afghanistan, most gravely the systemic oppression and persecution of women and girls. The deepening assault on human rights, especially the calculated and extreme acts of exclusion of women and girls from society and public life, are not just forms of repression, they are dehumanising atrocities rooted in misogyny and control. Romania strongly condemns these acts and supports the ICC's recent issuance of arrest warrants against key Taliban leaders on charges of gender persecution. Holding the Taliban accountable for these violations is mandatory. Reiterating its call on the *de facto* authorities to repeal all discriminatory laws, edicts and practises, Romania reaffirms its strong support for the work of the SR and all relevant international mechanisms, including UNAMA, CEDAW, ICC and others, that document abuses and seek accountability in Afghanistan. In closing, Romania deplores the suffering caused by the recent devastating earthquakes that struck Afghanistan, a tragic reminder that the hardship of the whole Afghan society only continues to worsen.

Sierra Leone acknowledges the role of the various mechanisms aimed at keeping the human rights situation in Afghanistan on this council's agenda. It also acknowledges the courage of Afghan civil society and women human rights defenders who continue to speak out despite the risks they face. Sierra Leone remains gravely concerned about the persistent and systematic violations of human rights in Afghanistan, particularly the severe restrictions on women's rights. Denying access to secondary higher education and excluding women from public life and employment represents a profound violation of fundamental rights and direct assaults on the prospect of peace, stability, and development in Afghanistan. Therefore, Sierra Leone urges the



de facto authorities in Afghanistan to urgently reverse their discriminatory policies against women and girls and to hone their international human rights obligations under the CRC and the CEDAW. Sierra Leone also emphasises the importance of accountability and supports the continuation of robust monitoring and reporting by the Council, including through the Special Rapporteur. Sierra Leone renews its call to the international community to maintain solidarity with the Afghan people, increase humanitarian assistance, and address reports of gender apartheid. In closing, it expresses its profound condolences to the people of Afghanistan for the last week earthquake.

Slovenia expresses its sincere condolences to all who lost dear ones in the recent earthquake in Afghanistan. This natural disaster adds to the dire economic and humanitarian situation in the country, which is already compounded by climate shocks and extreme weather events, as well as by the Taliban policies that severely curtail Afghan women's contribution to the country's economy and development. Slovenia recalls that no decree adopted by the Taliban since August 2021 restricting the life of women and girls has so far been repealed. Afghanistan is a state party to CEDAW, CRC, and the Rome Statute of the ICC. In the absence of domestic accountability mechanisms to address violations of international law, Slovenia supports the efforts of the international community to address the systemic repression of human rights in the country through international accountability mechanisms.

Spain expresses its deep concern over the result of four years of Taliban rule, for which we lack the legal concepts to describe the cruelty of policies and edicts that have not only curtailed the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, but also seek to erase them from all spheres of life. The CEDAW Committee has joined UN experts in describing this situation as gender apartheid, which should be taken very seriously. This barbarity shall not be normalized. The courage and resilience of Afghan women's networks must move us to respond to their demands for justice. Since 2021, Spain has been supporting listening spaces for Afghan women to express their views and strategies in the face of the repression they suffer and for their inclusion in the political processes relating to their country. Furthermore, Spain strongly supports the international criminal justice system. Last November, Spain, together with five other countries, submitted a referral to the International Criminal Court on crimes against humanity, including gender-based persecution. The arrest warrants against two senior Taliban leaders send a strong message against gender-based persecution. More must be done as part of coordinated international action. As members of the Human Rights Council, Spain believes that this body should strengthen its efforts to promote accountability in Afghanistan. Our strength and credibility will be measured by our response.

Sweden jointly with Nordic-Baltic countries express their support to the SR for his steadfast commitment to the Afghan people, principled approach to the *de facto* authorities, and balanced advice to the international community. Over the past four years, the human rights situation under the Taliban has continuously deteriorated, reaching an unbearable level. Afghan women and girls are prohibited from education after sixth grade and women are being increasingly coerced not to leave their house without a male chaperone. Public flogging is reinstated. And as the SR has described it, the systematic discrimination faced by women and girls in Afghanistan may amount to gender persecution, which is a crime against humanity. The Taliban should be held accountable through strengthening existing accountability mechanisms, including through the



ICJ. The exclusion of half of the population has detrimental consequences for the entire Afghan society. The Nordic-Baltic countries support Afghan women and girls in their immense resilience. Without them, Afghanistan will never achieve sustainable stability and prosperity.

Switzerland remains deeply concerned over the serious and systematic violations of human rights in Afghanistan. Women and girls continue to be deprived of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. This includes access to education, employment, health care, and public life. According to human experts, this system of institutionalised oppression is tantamount to gender persecution and can be considered a crime against humanity. Switzerland firmly condemns arbitrary arrests, enforces appearance, torture, and cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment on those detained. This is a violation of international obligations, as Afghanistan has a state party to CEDAW and the ICCPR. Switzerland takes note of developments in the international justice system and the emission of arrest warrants, the issuance of arrest warrants by the ICC. These are important steps in fighting impunity. It is essential that all violations be independently investigated and credible, and that those responsible be brought to justice. The creation of an international mechanism to complement the ongoing investigations is an matter of accountability and essential.

Türkiye notes with concern measures pushing Afghan women and girls out of the public sphere, notably the decisions to ban girls from education and women from NGO and the UN works. Education is a universal human right which all individuals must enjoy on the basis of equal opportunity and in a non-discriminatory manner. Overtly denouncing these bans, including at the top level of its President, Türkiye is playing an active role in the OIC's efforts to convey clear and unified messages on these issues. Practical and creative action is needed by the international community to alleviate the suffering of the Afghan people. Türkiye continues its assistance to Afghanistan both bilaterally and through international organisations. Most recently, Türkiye has contributed 3.5 million US dollars to UNDP-led Special Trust Fund to support health and education sectors. On the bilateral level, we continue to send assistance trains to Afghanistan. Following the earthquakes in Herat and Jalalabad, Türkiye sent personnel and relief material, and it will continue to stand by in solidarity with the Afghan people at every step of the way.

Ukraine remains gravely alarmed by the systematic dismantling of human rights in the recent years that deprive women and girls of education, employment, healthcare and freedom of movement. This deliberate erasure from public life amounts to gender persecution. The recent earthquakes have tragically highlighted this injustice. Due to Taliban-imposed restrictions, many injured women were left without rescue or medical aid, which is gender discrimination that cost lives and it was a moment of national tragedy. Ukraine is deeply troubled by public executions, corporal punishment and the repression of civil society and independent media. The ongoing humanitarian crisis, worsened by forced refugee returns, has left millions in poverty and despair, with women-headed households most at risk. Ukraine urges the *de facto* authorities to rescind discriminatory decrees, restore women's rights and executions and corporal punishments and respect freedom of expression. Ukraine calls on the international community to support Afghan victims and survivors, to support accountability through international mechanisms, including the ICC and ensure protection against refoulement. A nation cannot advance while silencing half of its people. Ukraine stands in unwavering solidarity with Afghans.



United Kingdom stands in solidarity with the Afghan people following the recent devastating earthquake. As a leading humanitarian donor, the UK has announced £1 million in emergency funding to deliver critical healthcare and emergency supplies to support affected families. Reiterating the UK's unwavering support for the SR's mandate, the UK appreciates his commitment to exposing the grave human rights situation in Afghanistan. Four years on, Taliban repression is intensifying. Women and girls face an increasingly dire reality, with over 100 edicts issued since 2021 that systematically restrict their rights and freedoms. The UK is deeply alarmed by the Taliban's public floggings and executions of men, women, and boys, carried out by the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, and by the rising number of arrests of women for alleged dress code violations. These and other oppressive measures must be reversed to uphold the rights of all Afghans. The international community must continue to exert coordinated pressure and remain united with the people of Afghanistan.

Views Expressed by Intergovernmental Organizations and UN Entities

The **European Union** strongly condemns the human rights violations and abuses in Afghanistan. OHCHR's mapping of Taliban's policies and practises, edicts and so-called laws confirms that women and girls in Afghanistan face systematic and systemic violations and abuses. These may amount to persecution on the grounds of gender, a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the ICC, to which Afghanistan is a state party. The EU calls for the protection of the human rights of women and girls, persons belonging to minorities, including ethnic and religious minorities, and persons in vulnerable situations, including LGBTI persons. Sustainable peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan require an Afghan-led inclusive political process with full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls and representation of all segments of the Afghan society. The EU supports the work of the SR, the OHCHR and UNAMA under its comprehensive mandate, with a strong human rights component. The EU continues to urge the Taliban to abide by Afghanistan's international human rights obligations, including those enshrined in CEDAW and CRC.

UNICEF recalls that this month marks four years since the *de facto* authorities banned girls from attending school beyond grade six, a denial of rights that today affects more than 2.2 million girls. A 17-year-old Afghan girl told UNICEF, after the closing of schools, 'I was told now I must get married because I have nothing else to do. When I heard these words as a child, my spirit was wounded and my heart broke. My childhood came to an end.' Such violations are unacceptable and must urgently end. Children in Afghanistan face multiple intersecting risks. Unexploded ordnances continue to take lives. 149 children have been killed or maimed in 2025 so far. Many children undertake challenging journeys to neighbouring countries, often unaccompanied and vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. Since January, UNICEF has reunified over 8,500 unaccompanied and separated children. Recent earthquakes, as well as the returning crisis, have resulted in an even greater need for female healthcare and social frontline workers. Their work is vital as they are highly skilled and have access to populations that men cannot reach, including children and women. In this extremely dire context, UNICEF again urgently calls on the *de facto* authorities to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of all women and children in Afghanistan, as set forth in CEDAW under CRC, and to immediately restore access to education for all girls.



UN Women stresses that four years since the Taliban's takeover, Afghan women and girls faced the world's most severe rights crisis. The Taliban's edicts, policies, and the 2024 PVPV Law have codified gender-based discrimination, systematically excluding women from education, employment, and public life. Not a single restrictive edict has been repealed. Instead, enforcement has intensified, embedding control into daily life and fostering compliance through fear and social pressure. The PVPV Law imposes sweeping restrictions, including classifying women's voice as meant to be concealed and not heard in public. These measures are not temporary, but a core pillar of Taliban governance. Their chilling effect is clear. 43% of Afghans, women, and men now report speaking less in public than before August 2021. Yet, Afghan women and girls are not giving up hope. In UN Women's nationwide survey, over half of women said they remain hopeful about achieving their aspirations despite nearly every door to public life being shut. The international community must hear this hope and respond. This means prioritising long-term flexible support for Afghan women's civil society organisations, ensuring at least 30% of all aid focusses on gender equality, and that no action or funding inadvertently reinforces discriminatory Taliban policies. Afghan women must shape the country's future, not be written out of it.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

Action for Development notes with concern that women and girls face compounded discrimination in accessing education, justice, healthcare, and humanitarian aid under the Taliban's gender apartheid regime. The loss of foreign aid and restriction on women aid workers have created an additional discriminatory hurdle to women and girls receiving vital assistance. Protecting women in Afghanistan is not only a matter of immediate aid, but also the preservation of their rights, dignity, agency, and hope for the future. Action for Development urges all stakeholders to take concrete actions moving beyond statements of solidarity. Praising those states that decided to hold Afghanistan accountable for CEDAW violations before the ICJ, it calls on them to reiterate their commitment to this important and historic initiative, and to share any progress regarding the process since their announcement last year. Finally, it calls on the UNHRC to renew the SR's mandate and establish a comprehensive investigative mechanism at this session in order to facilitate investigation and evidence preservation as well as to assess accountability measures and prevent further violations.

Amnesty International denounces that the Taliban continue to intensify draconian restrictions on the people of Afghanistan, while the Taliban attacks on the rights of women and girls may amount to the crime against humanity of gender persecution. Those critical of their draconian rules and policies continue to face arbitrary arrest, detention, and enforced appearance. The Taliban rules, decisions, and practises particularly discriminate against women, ethnic, and religious minority. This year, UNRWA reported that the Taliban in Badakhshan province forced members of Ismaili Shia community to convert to Sunni branch of Islam, and those who refused were subjected to physical assaults, coercions, and death threats. As the humanitarian crisis continues to deepen, exacerbated by natural disasters such as the recent earthquake, states, particularly Iran and Pakistan, have taken an unprecedented move of continuing mass forced deportation of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers, including former government officials, HRDs, journalists, dissidents, who are particularly at risk of human rights violations and abuses at the hands of the Taliban once they return. The catastrophic human rights situation in



Afghanistan builds on a long-standing culture of impunity that results from a persistent lack of accountability for human rights violations and abuses, as well as crimes that are international law for over 40 years. Significant steps must be taken urgently towards accountability if this vicious cycle of impunity is to be broken. Amnesty International urges the UNHRC to establish an accountability mechanism to investigate, collect, consolidate, preserve, analyse evidence of past and ongoing crimes under international law and other human rights violations and abuses committed in Afghanistan, and prepare files to facilitate and expedite fair and independent criminal proceedings.

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) laments the grave reality of Afghanistan and the Taliban's illegitimate and violent rule. In four years, they have dismantled every safeguard for human rights, replacing the legal system with arbitrary decrees in the edicts that grant their impunity. The Taliban's PVPV Law and related edicts have institutionalised the system of gender apartheid, erasing women and girls from public life. Gender-based persecution, segregation, and violence are now state policy. Journalists, rights defenders, former government officials, and anyone who resists face detention, torture, enforced disappearances, or execution with no access to justice. Religious and ethnic minorities are subjected to targeted attacks, land seizures, and forced displacement, placing their very survival at risk. FORUM-ASIA notes the ICC's arrest warrants against Taliban leaders as a vital first step, but the magnitude of crimes in Afghanistan demands more. The international community must centre the voices of women and girls in civil society in all discussions and decisions about the future of their country. The UNHRC must play its important part by responding to their calls for accountability, thereby establishing an independent accountability mechanism to investigate, preserve evidence, and advance justice.

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada and the International Bar Association are alarmed by the dual human rights situation in Afghanistan and the Taliban rule. The associations are alarmed by the forced deportations of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan, including judges, prosecutors, lawyers, human rights defenders, former government personnel, and women without male guardians. Over the term, they face threats of arbitrary detention, torture, and targeted killings. The Taliban have enacted laws erasing women's cases from identification documents. Public violence has become widespread, including floggings and daily reports emerge of women being killed with impunity often by their husbands. Forced displacements of Hazara families amount to ethnic cleansing and suspected genocide. In cases of violence against women, the normalisation of violence against women is profoundly disheartening. The two associations call on the UNHRC to establish an independent investigative mechanism to document and analyse past and present human rights violations and international crimes, and urge the state to provide urgent support, settlement, and legal assistance to Afghan lawyers, judges, defenders, former government personnel, and unprotected women.

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) urges states and donors to promptly restore, increase and sustain flexible funding for women civil society. WILPF remains deeply concerned over the worsening violations of women's rights in Afghanistan. Since the Taliban takeover, Afghan women have been systematically erased from public life, facing policies that amount to gender persecution and apartheid. Echoing the CEDAW Committee's call to dismantle these discrimination systems, WILPF urges the international community to treat these



violations not only as women's rights issues, but as crimes under international law. It further reiterates the call for an independent accountability mechanism to complement the SR's mandate. Addressing impunity, advancing accountability and supporting victims rights to justice, truth and reparation is essential. Only by putting Afghan women at the centre of policy funding and diplomacy can the international community help reclaim rights, dismantle gender apartheid and rebuild peace.

Madre Inc. jointly with other NGOs welcomes OHCHR report while encouraging the High Commissioner to draw further attention to widespread anti-LGBTQ rights violations in Afghanistan. August 2025 marked four years since the fall of Afghanistan's government. The Taliban has not ceased a systematic persecution of women, girls and LGBTIQ plus people. They are subjected to arbitrary detention, sexual violence, torture and systematic denial of other fundamental rights. These abuses amount to crime against humanity of gender persecution underscored by the ICC's recent arrest warrants against two Taliban leaders. A devastating earthquake in Afghanistan took countless lives and affected women and girls disproportionately due to the Taliban's discriminatory gender policies. Meanwhile, Iran and Pakistan are subjecting Afghans to mass deportations. Madre Inc. calls for the renewal and full resourcing of the SR's mandate; the establishment of an independent and comprehensive international investigative mechanism to document past and ongoing crimes against women, girls and LGBTIQ+ people; and support for ICC's recent efforts to hold the Taliban accountable and initiative to bring Afghanistan before the International Court of Justice for rights violations.

Afghanistan Democracy and Development Organisation notes that four years after the Taliban's seize of power, Afghanistan remains one of the most repressive countries in the world. Afghan women and girls face a system of institutionalised discrimination and gender apartheid. They are denied access to education, excluded from employment and public life. The Global Torture Index reveals alarming patterns of arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment in Afghanistan. Human rights defenders, journalists, former officials and minorities are particularly at risk. We are deeply concerned by the forced return of more than 2 million Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan this year, including unaccompanied minors, children, women and others at high risk of persecution. These forced returns violate the principle of *non-refoulement*. People in provinces such as Kunar, Nangarhar and beyond suffer the impacts of recent earthquakes with their urgent humanitarian needs and need, especially for women and girls. This highlights the need for international support and vital role of women's education and employment, as female doctors and professionals are essential to saving lives in emergencies. The Organization urges the UNHRC to establish an independent accountability mechanism to investigate past and ongoing violations and end impunity.

United Nations Watch (UN Watch) extends its condolences to the families of 2,000 victims who perished in the earthquake last week in Afghanistan. This tragedy was only made worse by what happened next. Rescue workers applying Taliban rules refused to help trapped and injured women and girls, some of them bleeding. They were left under the rubble. Four years after seizing power, the Taliban continues to trample basic human rights of its own people. Women are banned from speaking or showing their faces. Human rights activists, journalists, teachers have faced enforced disappearances, torture and summary executions. And now, into this torment, the Islamic Republic of Iran has, since June, expelled 700,000 Afghan refugees, violently rounding



them up. Humiliated from its war with Israel, Tehran is seeking a scapegoat and accuses Afghan refugees of being spies. Many are beaten. They threw us out like garbage, said Sahar, a mother of five. Already this year, Iran has expelled 1.8 million refugees. UN Watch brought Afghan activists brought several Afghan activists at the Council to sound the alarm. But where is the rest of the world? Where are the mass rallies in London, Paris and Madrid for suffering Afghan women and girls? Where are the campus protests for 1.8 million Muslim refugees expelled by Iran? Why is the Taliban now planning to elect, by acclamation on 8 October, a representative of Iran?

Human Rights Watch (HRW) stresses that for the past four years, the Taliban have intensified their attacks on the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan. The Taliban's widespread and systematic assault on women's and girls' rights constitute the crimes against humanity of gender persecution, which UN experts have labelled gender apartheid. These severe restrictions have expanded to freedom of movement and expression, further curtailing women's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. As the Taliban deepen their repression, the UNHRC urgently needs to establish an independent and comprehensive accountability mechanism, distinct yet complementary to the work of the SR, with a mandate to investigate past and ongoing abuses, including Taliban crimes against women and girls. Afghan women continue to resist the attacks on their rights, and we should stand with them in solidarity with concrete actions. An accountability mechanism would be a vital tool in addressing the entrenched impunity at the heart of Afghanistan's human rights crisis, advancing access to justice, truth and reparation for victims of abuses. It will also have an important deterrent effect. As another year passes with girls denied their right to education, the UNHRC cannot wait any longer to act. HRW urges the Council to establish a robust, comprehensive accountability mechanism this session.

World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS) is deeply concerned by the systematic erosion of fundamental freedoms in Afghanistan under Taliban's four-year rule, a decline that led to a total closure of civil space. This closure has resulted in no room for CSO, activists and journalists to operate independently or safely. HRDs and journalists face constant harassment, arbitrary detention, torture and enforced disappearance by the *de facto* authorities. Independent media outlets have been raided and shut down. Women and girls have been completely excluded from public life, tantamount to gender apartheid, while activists and journalists deported from Pakistan face a significant risk of prosecution by the Taliban. CIVICUS supports efforts by the ICC to prosecute two of the Taliban's top leaders for crimes against humanity and calls by civil society and the SR to establish an independent accountability mechanism with a comprehensive mandate to address grave abuses and international crimes. CIVICUS calls upon the UNHRC to renew the SR's mandate; urgently strengthen monitoring and reporting on human rights violations in Afghanistan; provide protection for Afghan civil society, especially women, human rights defenders at risk; and support efforts to ensure accountability for serious crimes by the Taliban.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

37 State Delegations

3 Inter-Governmental Organizations and UN Entities

10 Non-Governmental Organizations