



50th regular session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 2: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the High Commissioner on the
situation of human rights in Afghanistan (HRC res. 48/1)

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On behalf of Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
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Mr. President, Madam High Commissioner,

I am speaking here today, more than 270 days after the Taliban expressly banned education for teenage girls. Since then, the Taliban has introduced policies and practices that could only be described as gender-apartheid.

Since the Taliban took control of the country, Afghan women and girls have been systematically excluded from accessing education, work, and health care. The Taliban has imposed sweeping restrictions on their rights *to freedom of expression, assembly, association, movement and public participation*. The recent directive on strict mahram and Hijab regulations is the latest manifestation of the Taliban's policy to erase women from public life.

Over the past 10 months, the Taliban has decimated civil society and independent media, *and killed or forced into exile human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, judges and officials of the former government*. Persecution of religious and ethnic minorities, torture, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances are widespread and systematic.

Crimes of the Taliban in the Northern regions of the country, in particular Panjshir and Andrab valleys, amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity under international law.

The dissolution of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has closed all doors for any form of redress for victims of grave violations.

The world can no longer afford to give the Taliban the benefit of the doubt. The Taliban has repeatedly demonstrated that they have no intention of honouring its commitments or respecting Afghanistan's international obligations.

The Council must act now to prevent further atrocities and put in place a robust international mechanism to investigate gross violations and abuses *of international human rights and humanitarian law in Afghanistan by the Taliban and all parties to the crisis*, and to hold perpetrators to account. *The world cannot fail the people of Afghanistan again.*

Thank you