



**Fateh Sami**

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## **Global Inaction Amid Taliban Oppression of Afghan Women:**

### **Silent Betrayal, Hypocrisy and Human Rights**

**Introduction:** Since the Taliban were reinstated in power on August 15, 2021, by the USA and its allies in an orchestrated plan under the guise of peace negotiations in Doha, Afghanistan has been plunged into severe repression, particularly against women and ethnic minorities. The international community has refrained from officially recognizing the Taliban regime, ostensibly due to its gross violations of human rights. Women, who had begun to make significant strides in education and employment, have seen their rights stripped away and their lives confined to their homes. Despite global outcries and promises to uphold human rights, many powerful nations and neighbouring countries have taken a passive stance, engaging in clandestine dealings with the Taliban while ignoring the dire situation of Afghan women. This essay critically examines the Taliban's oppressive policies towards women, the international community's hypocritical stance, and the role of the UN and human rights organizations that have failed to act decisively against these atrocities.

#### **The Plight of Afghan Women Under Taliban Rule**

Since the Taliban were installed by the USA and its allies on August 15, 2021, the regime's impact on Afghanistan, particularly on its women, has been devastating. The international community has not officially recognized the

Taliban, largely due to their discriminatory policies against women and ethnic groups. This non-recognition reflects global disapproval of the Taliban's actions, especially their harsh treatment of women. Consequently, half of the Afghan population has been removed from public life and confined to their homes, effectively imprisoned within their own country.

Despite the international community's claims to uphold human rights, many countries have chosen to remain spectators to this tragedy. Nations such as China, Russia, Iran, and, to some extent, India, on one side, and the USA, Britain, Pakistan, and their allies and Saudi Arabia on the other, have engaged in secretive dealings with the Taliban. These engagements have been pursued despite the Taliban's blatant human rights violations, particularly against women. Women in Afghanistan have been stripped of their rights to work and to receive an education beyond the primary level, leading to a societal regression of monumental proportions.

Under Taliban rule, women cannot leave their homes without being accompanied by a close male relative, a policy that has dire economic and social consequences. This inhumane restriction has prevented women from working and providing for the needs of their families, especially in cases where women are the primary breadwinners. Women face immense financial and economic hardship as they are barred from participating in any social, economic, or productive work. This prohibition extends to education, with women being denied access to universities and high schools. The situation is particularly dire for women in rural areas who belong to the poorest segments of society.

Natural calamities, such as severe climatic conditions, floods, and earthquakes, have exacerbated the plight of Afghan women, thrusting them into catastrophic situations. Former government employees and professionals, including teachers and private business owners, have not received their retirement benefits. The Taliban administration has even reduced the salaries of primary school teachers, further straining the economic stability of many families.

Recent actions by the Pakistani government, particularly the forced eviction of Afghan refugees, have garnered significant media attention. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), about 80% of the refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan in Pakistan are women and children. This displacement adds another layer of complexity to the already dire situation faced by Afghan women.

According to WFP official Philippe Kroot, "Afghanistan is in a crisis where the most vulnerable women and children cannot access the food that is on the market. Some of the most affected by the hunger crisis now are women and girls." There are 15.3 million people in acute food insecurity, which includes 3.5 million

people facing emergency levels of food insecurity, according to the UN agency. Women are not salaried anymore. They cannot find work outside of their homes. It is very difficult for them to buy food and basic needs. They have very few opportunities left to look after themselves and their children, particularly for widows.

A staggering 23.5 million people in Afghanistan are living in starvation, with 69% of the population lacking access to safe drinking water. The severe restrictions imposed on women have only exacerbated the economic stagnation in the country. While international media occasionally highlight the plight of Afghan women and girls, domestic media have been silenced or forced to comply with the Taliban regime. Reports of abuse and violations of women's rights often go unreported. However, a UN Women report released on June 10 highlighted that the oppression of women and girls in Afghanistan has reached unprecedented levels since the Taliban took power.

Banning women from participating in society can have serious consequences for Afghanistan's economic development. The Taliban's relentless crackdown is affecting the profitability of women-run businesses. As experience shows, law, democracy, and lasting peace are unattainable without women's participation in society, who constitute half of the population in the country. It is time for the world community to stand firmly against the cruel discriminatory action of the Taliban imposed on women and other ethnic groups.

Afghan women worldwide have repeatedly criticized the international community for prioritizing engagement with the Taliban over women's rights. They argue that global powers place their programs ahead of Afghan women's rights and democracy. The reluctance of regional countries to address women's rights in Afghanistan is also problematic. When was the last time a significant official from a regional country directly addressed this issue? Regional powers potentially have tremendous influence over the Taliban, but their eagerness to secure their interests has led to humble submission to the Taliban's rule.

Three years of consultation and dialogue have yielded little, emboldening the Taliban. The global indifference towards women's issues has led to a significant political victory for the Taliban, which is considered a betrayal not only to Afghan women but to women worldwide. The issue of restrictions on Afghan women and girls is transnational, strengthening extremism and laying the groundwork for increased insecurity and instability in the region.

Women and girls in Afghanistan believe that the Taliban cannot be trusted to improve their current situation. They urge the international community not to recognize the Taliban unless a broad-based government represents the whole people, including women's rights. The restrictions and all inhumane and

discriminatory regulations, policies, and laws imposed on women and girls should be removed immediately. The international community's role is crucial in advocating for the rights and freedoms of Afghan women, ensuring that their voices are heard, and their rights are restored.

**Conclusion:** The oppressive regime of the Taliban has pushed Afghan women to the brink of annihilation, stripping them of their basic rights and confining them to their homes. Despite global outcries and promises to uphold human rights, many powerful nations and neighbouring countries have taken a passive stance, engaging in clandestine dealings with the Taliban while ignoring the dire situation of Afghan women. The international community, including the UN and human rights organizations, has failed to take decisive action against the Taliban. Instead of standing firm against these atrocities, they have chosen to engage in political and economic negotiations with the regime, turning a blind eye to the suffering of Afghan women. This inaction has emboldened the Taliban, knowing that their actions will not face significant consequences. The UN's inability to enforce its human rights mandates and the prioritization of strategic interests by global powers over human rights have resulted in a betrayal of Afghan women. The world must recognize that the plight of Afghan women is not just a regional issue but a global one that demands immediate and concerted action to ensure their rights and freedoms are restored.

The widespread condemnation of the cruel restrictions imposed on women in Afghanistan reflects a violation of all accepted human rights norms. It criticizes the hypocritical stance of nations that engage in clandestine dealings with the Taliban while turning a blind eye to the regime's barbaric actions. Countries like China and the USA are clandestinely involved in extracting Afghanistan's unique minerals, prioritizing their interests over the well-being of the Afghan people. Whether recognizing or not recognizing the Taliban administration, there has been no positive impact on the welfare of Afghan citizens. Currently, Afghanistan resembles a carcass, with global scavengers voraciously exploiting its resources at the expense of its people.

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