

The escalating crisis facing Afghan women and girls: Call for action

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Abstract

This paper examines the deteriorating humanitarian crisis and rollback of women's rights in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized control in August 2021. It provides background on the Taliban's oppressive policies and actions that have severely restricted women's freedoms, access to work and education, and participation in public life. The paper documents increased gender-based violence under Taliban rule, including forced marriage, honor killings, public floggings, and the targeting of women activists, judges and professionals with threats, arbitrary detention and violence.

It highlights the economic and humanitarian catastrophe unfolding as international aid has been suspended due to the political situation. This has resulted in a liquidity crisis, soaring unemployment, collapsed public services, and acute malnutrition emergency with over 90% of Afghans now dependent on humanitarian assistance. The paper emphasizes the disproportionate impact on women and girls due to aid cuts, food insecurity, healthcare breakdown, and Taliban gender policies banning female employment and secondary education.

The analysis traces the factors driving mass displacement within and from Afghanistan, creating one of the world's largest protracted refugee crises. It critiques inadequate asylum and resettlement quotas offered by EU states, leaving many Afghans with precarious legal status or dependent on overstretched host countries like Pakistan and Iran.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Taliban, Humanitarian crisis, Women's rights, Gender discrimination, Gender-based violence, Forced marriage, Access to education, Displacement, Resettlement, International aid, Economic crisis, Food insecurity, Policy recommendations.