



"Day by day, they are trying to erase women from society"*
AF4WR Condemns the Oppression of Afghan Women and Girls

The world looks on as the situation of women and girls in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan is returned to pre-9/11 conditions. The newly announced measures—most of which were in force in 2001—obliterate two decades of slow progress for women. They include:

- Prohibition of women and girls from making eye contact with any male person who is not their relative by blood or marriage;
- Prohibition of women and girls from speaking in public;
- Prohibition of women and girls from singing.

After the 9/11 attacks and the war on Afghanistan, there were high hopes for women's rights, and some of the worst oppressions were lessened or removed. But even then, women still remained firmly under the control of men. Now, those controls are deemed insufficient and the very worst of pre-9/11 Taliban rule has been reimposed and reinforced.

It is as if over two decades of history have been obliterated and long campaigning by women in Afghanistan and internationally has been for nothing. "The silence of the international community regarding the actions of the Taliban is encouraging them to create new laws and restrictions every day", says 37-year-old Kabul woman Halema.

This new attack on Afghan women's rights is designed to dehumanise women and break any residual spirit that they may have clung on to. It creates a culture in which girls will learn that the only purpose their lives hold is that which men determine. It will be virtually the only education they will receive: Afghanistan is now the only country in the world that prohibits schooling for girls beyond the age of 11.

We cannot turn away from highlighting the physical, sexual and psychological abuses that are normalised under these practices.

Australian Feminists For Women's Rights condemn in the strongest possible terms all measures to deny Afghan women and girls their human rights, agency and dignity. We stand in solidarity with all women and girls impacted by this new regime.

We applaud Foreign Minister Penny Wong's statement of 24 August on behalf of the Australian government condemning this violence, and urge you to write to her, and to your local Federal representative, to call on Australia to take all possible steps to instigate protections for Afghan women and girls.

* Halema, cited in a [27 August report by the Australian Broadcasting Commission](#).