

Emergency Motion: The rights of women and girls in Afghanistan

Conference notes:

1. Since the Taliban came to power in 2021 Afghanistan has emerged as one of the most extreme examples of state-enforced oppression of women in the world.
2. In August 2024 the Taliban announced new draconian 'vice and virtue' laws, which further curtail women's rights including banning women from speaking in public and forcing them to thickly veil their bodies and faces in public, thus depriving them of their fundamental right to freedom of expression.
3. In August 2024 the Taliban barred the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, from entering Afghanistan.
4. Gender persecution is a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to which Afghanistan is a State Party.

Conference believes that:

- A) Women have a basic right to equality, and societies flourish where both sexes can participate equally in society under the law.
- B) The Taliban is committing crimes against humanity in its treatment of women and girls and should face prosecution in the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- C) The Taliban is also answerable to the International Court of Justice for its violations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which Afghanistan ratified without reservation in 2003.

Conference reaffirms its call for measures to assist Afghan asylum seekers and calls on the UK Government to:

- i) Publicly condemn the actions of the Taliban government towards women and girls in Afghanistan.
- ii) Campaign for a UN-mandated accountability mechanism to collect and preserve evidence of international crimes being committed in Afghanistan against women and girls.
- iii) Work with international leaders to ensure that the ICC and other courts have the resources and cooperation needed to prosecute Taliban leaders for the persecution of women and girls.
- iv) Target UK aid that is earmarked for empowering women and girls in Afghanistan towards local agreements that permit projects led by women for the benefit of women and girls.
- v) Call for international recognition of the Taliban to be conditional on the removal of all restrictions on the rights of women and girls.
- vi) Help establish permanent structures to enable the participation and representation of Afghan women, including internationally.

vii) Demand that the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan be allowed to enter the country.

Notes for conference committee

This motion was written with input from women who are mentoring and have worked with women in Afghanistan.