



Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

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(Please check against delivery)

Madam Chair,
Excellencies, and Distinguished Colleagues,

I want to align my statement with the statement delivered by Pakistan on behalf of group of 77 and China.

Today we speak about rights of children. Let me convey the grim picture of millions of children in my country, Afghanistan.

The children in Afghanistan have suffered from multiple social, economic and political challenges particularly they have been the main victim of the conflict. The situation has further declined since the Taliban takeover by force in August 2021, making Afghanistan the worst country for children as noted by UNICEF and Save the Children.

Children who have had no contribution to the bloody conflict or the dire situation in my country, are paying the heaviest price. Millions of children have been exposed to grave violations. They are suffering from dire humanitarian conditions, facing food insecurity, as well as multidimensional poverty, and many are on the brink of famine.

Afghanistan made it to the list of the deadliest countries for children as noted by the SRSG report on Children and Armed Conflict A/77/143, with hundreds of children killed and maimed. Now we see millions of girls banned from accessing secondary education and many, including young girls, have been forced into early marriages.

Madam Chair,

Children in my country are living a nightmare, not only as they sleep but also every single day of their lives. Afghan girls face early marriage, honor killings, domestic abuse, and sexual violence. Afghan boys suffer many of the same risks, along with military recruitment into armed conflict, and sexual exploitation. Both girls and boys are exposed to hazardous labour practices, contact with landmines, and violence at home.

Economic hardships have caused many families to resort to selling their children, marrying off their young daughters out of desperation, offloading responsibility for their care and protection. Others have had no choice but to let go of their boys and allow them to be conscripted by the Taliban Forces only to help bring food to the table.

Mister/Madam Chair,

children everywhere must be spending time at their school desks and not married or fighting. However, for children in Afghanistan, this is becoming a dream or frankly an impossible miracle.

Furthermore, there are reports of deliberate setting schools on fire with intention to destroy schools and educational centers for students. These acts force children out of schools and make them easy targets for terrorists and radicals to recruit.

Although the fighting has largely abated after the Taliban takeover, the UN country's task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children verified 450 grave violations, affecting 334 children as well as 25 incidents of attacks against schools between 1 April and 30 June 2022 alone.

Just 10 days ago, a suicide bomb attack at the Kaaj Educational Center, packed with hundreds of students from Hazara community, killed at least dozens children in Kabul with the majority of casualties being girls. As violations against children increase, perpetrators enjoy impunity and these attacks and violations become a daily reality for millions of children and their families. The de facto authorities are not only failing to secure the country for children, but are also actively abusing those children.

As a result of these tragic circumstances, Afghan children are traumatized and suffering from immense mental health issues. They lack access to psychological support and care. Furthermore, many of development funds and programs for children were halted since the Taliban took over.

Distinguished colleagues,

Afghanistan is the hardest place in the world to be a child, with high child mortality rates, poor levels of nutrition and rampant violence against children.

I urge all member states of the United Nations and the international community to pressure the Taliban to lift bans on girls accessing secondary education and to form an inclusive and accountable system based on the will of people, rule of law and justice to serve the people. By doing so they take the first step in relieving Afghanistan from the current crisis and saving including millions of children from disastrous consequences by putting them back on the school path towards a bright future.

While I thank UNAMA, UNICEF and other UN funds and programs for their dedicated efforts, I call for the development of stronger mechanisms to document and report human rights violations particularly violations against children. Their role is crucial in urging the Taliban to ensure children access their basic rights in all social, economic and cultural spheres.

I also call on the International Community to increase their fund to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Response, especially now that winter is upon us. Children of Afghanistan need you!

I Thank you!