

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Naseer Ahmad Faiq, Chargé d'affaires of the
Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations
at the Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace, and Security
25 October 2024**

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, and esteemed briefers,

I begin by expressing my gratitude to Her Excellency Viola Amherd and the Permanent Mission of Switzerland for convening this vital debate. I also extend my appreciation to Deputy Secretary General Amina J. Mohammed, Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN Women, and other briefers for their steadfast advocacy for women's rights globally. I thank the previous speakers for their reflections on the ongoing human rights crisis facing women and girls in Afghanistan.

Madam President,

Our discussion on "Women Building Peace in a Changing Environment" comes at a critical time, as the world grapples with challenges that disproportionately affect women and girls. In Afghanistan, women and girls face an acute social, humanitarian, and human rights crisis under the institutionalized gender apartheid imposed by the Taliban since August 2021.

One of the most devastating aspects of this regime's rule has been the ban on girls' education beyond grade six. Afghanistan now stands as the only country in the world where girls are barred from secondary and higher education. Equal access to quality education for all children—boys and girls—is not just a right but a necessity for building a just and inclusive society. Yet, for Afghan girls, this right is denied. Afghanistan once committed to enhancing women's roles in peace and security through its National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Afghan women, who were vital societal contributors and made up 27% of civil servants, including positions as MPs, Cabinet members, educators, doctors, Ambassadors, and leaders, are now restricted by over 90 oppressive edicts. The Taliban's Vice and Virtue Law bans them from speaking publicly, traveling alone, or appearing outside, effectively excluding them from public life. These issues extend beyond gender, representing national crises with profound impacts on Afghanistan's future and economy. The Special Rapporteur has urged recognizing this gender apartheid as a crime against humanity.

Madam President,

Let me reiterate that the Taliban's policies do not represent the culture of the Afghan people or true Islamic values. This has been reaffirmed by OIC countries. These policies violate Afghanistan's international obligations under human rights treaties.

As one Afghan woman poignantly stated, “The Taliban want to make us disappear—but we will not be erased. Not from history, not from our country, and not from the world’s conscience.” Her words reflect the resilience of Afghan women and girls, who continue to resist, even in silence.

The international community must act with moral clarity and not remain passive. The United Nations must recognize the Taliban’s gender apartheid as a crime against humanity. Restoring women’s rights is crucial for justice, accountability, and global security. In this regard, we commend Germany, Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands for their initiative in holding the Taliban accountable under CEDAW.

Today, I am not merely recounting these atrocities—we are calling for action. This Council has a duty to address this crisis with unity and urgency.

First, the UN Security Council should press the Taliban to uphold international human rights obligations, recognizing gender apartheid as a crime to ensure justice.

Second, Afghanistan’s peace must be inclusive. We must support Afghan women leaders who are resisting repression, as their involvement is vital for future peace.

Third, international resources must be allocated to protect Afghan women, including expanding humanitarian aid and safeguarding human rights defenders.

Fourth, any engagement with the Taliban by the international community must be principled and rooted in tangible outcomes for human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls. Fifth, the UN-led Doha process must prioritize women’s rights in Afghanistan and the inclusion of credible Afghan stakeholders, including Afghan women, in any political settlement.

Lastly, this Council must act in cohesion and unity to find a political settlement by implementing relevant Security Council resolutions, including 1325, 2513, and 2721, and by considering the appointment of a UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan. The international community, governments, NGOs, and civil society must create a unified response to the Taliban’s systemic abuses.

In conclusion, we must recognize that the exclusion and oppression of women in Afghanistan is not just a tragedy for Afghan women—it is a crisis that threatens the fabric of peace and security worldwide. The path forward must embrace the full participation of women in all aspects of peacebuilding and governance. Afghan women must not be forgotten. It is our collective responsibility to support their resistance and ensure their rights are restored.

Thank you.