



Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

Statement by

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**Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the
United Nations**

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Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of
Religion or Belief**

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Madam Chair,

We thank Ms. Nazila Ghanea, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, for her report.

Freedom of religion or belief is an essential human right, inseparable from human dignity, equality, and the principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

In Afghanistan, this freedom continues to face serious and growing restrictions under the Taliban's rule.

Religious and ethnic minorities, particularly Shia Muslims, including Hazaras and Ismailis, continue to face discrimination, restrictions on religious practices, and threats to their safety. Restrictions on religious commemorations, interference with religious institutions, and the imposition of a single interpretation of religion undermine Afghanistan's longstanding religious and cultural diversity.

We are equally concerned by the use of religious interpretations to justify systematic discrimination against women and girls, including their exclusion from education, employment, and public life.

The Taliban's discriminatory policies must not be equated with Islam or Afghan culture. Their denial of fundamental rights stands in stark contrast to Islamic principles of justice, human dignity, and the pursuit of knowledge. No religion or culture justifies discrimination, persecution, or the exclusion of women and girls from education and public life. Afghanistan's rich Islamic traditions and cultural diversity have long reflected the values of knowledge, dignity, tolerance, and coexistence.

Thank you, Madam Chair.