



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

Third Committee, UNGA81 | Agenda Item 70 (a-d)

Briefing by Ms. Andrea Bolaños Vargas, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

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Mr. Chair,

We thank the Special Rapporteur for her report.

In Afghanistan, defending human rights can cost one's freedom, safety and life. The Taliban target defenders, particularly women, through arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, torture and reprisals against their families.

Women protesters and human rights defenders have reported sexual harassment, threats of sexual violence and sexual abuse in Taliban custody. These abuses punish peaceful resistance and silence others. Stigma and fear of retaliation obstruct reporting and accountability. Those advocating for girls' education, supporting survivors or documenting abuses continue their work at considerable personal risk. Threats against their families deepen their vulnerability and discourage others from speaking out.

We call for independent investigations, survivor protection and accountability. No woman should face abuse for demanding her rights; no perpetrator should enjoy impunity.

We welcome the report's focus on mental health, displacement and the criminalization of human rights work. Afghan defenders living in hiding or exile urgently need practical support. Leaving Afghanistan does not necessarily bring safety.

We urge Member States to provide emergency protection, asylum and safe relocation pathways, uphold non-refoulement, and ensure predictable funding, legal assistance and confidential psychosocial care.

Afghan women defenders must participate meaningfully and safely in decisions concerning their country. Engagement with the Taliban must never compromise their protection or accountability. Thank you.