

AFGHANISTAN:

End Violence Against Women and Girls



We welcome the announcement by the Justine Greening, Secretary of State for International Development (4 March), that tackling violence against women and girls in Afghanistan will be a strategic priority for the Department for International Development. We need to see this commitment translated into a dedicated programme of properly resourced and funded work.

The UK could make a real difference if this is prioritised across government departments including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Some gains have been made on women's rights since 2001, but violence against women and girls persists at alarmingly high rates. As most combat troops are set to withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, it is vital now to secure and build on those gains.

We call upon Justine Greening, Secretary of State for International Development, and Baroness Warsi, Minister for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to ensure their departments work together to:

- Consult with and fund Afghan women's organisations working to end violence against women, including those who run women's shelters
- Press and assist the Afghan government to fully implement the Elimination of Violence against Women law and the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan
- Support and fund Family Response Units (which address domestic violence) and ensure additional measures are taken to increase women's recruitment and retention in the police
- Allocate new funding to tackle violence against women
- Identify and implement specific and measureable improvements for gendered protection and support for Afghan women human rights defenders.



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AFGHANISTAN:

The UK government must prioritise ending violence against women



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