



FACT SHEET

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 progress has been made to protect the rights of women in Afghanistan but, with the withdrawal of international troops planned for the end of 2014, insecurity could increase and Amnesty International is very concerned that women's rights are at risk.

KEY FACTS

The Taliban ruled Afghanistan from 1996 – 2001

Under the Taliban, women and girls were:

- Banned from going to school or studying.
- Banned from working.
- Banned from leaving the house without a male chaperone.
- Banned from showing their skin in public.
- Banned from accessing healthcare delivered by men (as women weren't allowed to work this meant healthcare was not available to women).
- Banned from being involved in politics or speaking publicly.

If these laws were disobeyed, punishments were harsh. A woman could be flogged for showing an inch or two of skin under her full-body burqa, beaten for attempting to study, stoned to death if she was found guilty of adultery.

After the fall of the Taliban in 2001 women and girls in Afghanistan gradually began to claim their basic human rights: many schools opened their doors to girls, women went back to work and voted in local and national elections. Some entered politics even though it was still very risky.

It's now been over ten years since the Taliban were overthrown but over the last few years they and other groups have increased attacks in an attempt to regain control. Women and girls have been particularly threatened and abused.



Afghan women right's activists demonstrating

An Afghan woman wearing a burqa votes in Kabul 2004



AMNESTY'S POSITION

Our campaign on Afghan women's rights is known as 'Protect the Progress'.

We demand that the UK government:

- Improves their support and protection for those women who work to defend human rights.
- Delivers on its promise to prioritise tackling violence against women in Afghanistan.
- Supports Afghan women to have a voice in the important debates that take place around women's rights in the country.

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