



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
30 December 2021

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-sixth session

14–25 March 2022

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”

Statement submitted by Imam Ali’s Popular Students Relief Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Women's social and economic status in Afghanistan

Life in today's world is tied to new technologies and development and speed in the advancement of science, and people seek to provide more prosperity, peace, and freedom for a better life. In this fast-paced world, however, we know a land, Afghanistan that was once the crossroads of cultures and the formation of civilizations. Afghanistan is rapidly returning to the most primitive form of life. It was once the origin of art, literature, and culture, but now it has fallen into the hands of an extremist group, the Taliban that has no basis or logic other than the destruction of the culture in their actions and words. A current that has taken power by relying on terrorists and brutal killings.

The Taliban sees man not as a valuable and rightful being, with freedom, but looks at people as an object that can be used in any way without considering him or her as a human being. They do not believe in the equality and consider women to be the lowest part of society. Despite their claims in the media, they deprived women of their basic human rights such as education and employment. Despite the efforts of Afghan women to get out of this situation, the Taliban are severely restricting and suppressing any efforts for freedom and development. Evidence of this behaviour is the restriction of education, working, and even the physical presence of women in the society after taking the power. There is much other evidence of extremist treatment of women, including severe punishment for women and public flogging on trumped-up charges.

These examples, documented in the media and in documentaries produced and published by independent organizations and reporters (such as the Times of India website), are enough to convince any impartial observer that the continuation of these conditions will bring a humanitarian catastrophe to the women of Afghanistan. This tragedy is not specific to women of a particular social class, but to all women living in the territory of the Taliban government. Women who were studying with the hope of a better future and working in various professions to dream of rebuilding their country and improving their family living conditions were suddenly deprived of all these opportunities.

Today, in addition to social constraints, they are in a tight spot and need urgent help to survive. This crisis is much more serious for women who are heads of households and working in the administrative or educational sectors and has reached the stage of urgency. These women face severe hardships to support themselves and their children and the current social and economic crisis make them more vulnerable. Among them are girls whose life in school was full of hope. The girls who had a vision of the future and saw themselves as a person who actively contribute to the growth and prosperity of their country. But today they are constantly asking in astonishment, why? What will be our destiny and role in the life and future of our society and country? How can we affect our lives and the lives of others and defend our rights without education? Who has the courage to answer these questions and tell these girls that they will not have freedom and choice without acquiring knowledge and skills and getting a job and income and that they will not have any choice?

It is difficult to tell a child to learn to obey the wishes of others to survive and to remain silent in the face of abuse and humiliation. She must accept that her physical and mental control is with others and that the only role that is defined for her is pregnancy and childbearing. This tragedy reaches its climax where these women will not even have the opportunity to raise their children. Because they have not been

trained to do so and will have to follow the same anti-woman patterns that govern their society.

The crises of Afghan women do not finish here. There are women who live in small and remote villages. They do not even have access to social media so that they may use this tool to make their voices heard, or get acquainted with a bigger world. Afghan women are exposed to very serious dangers, including enslavement, forced migration and displacement. Hunger, lack of access to basic health care, and inability to protect themselves from predators and aggressors make them more vulnerable. Moreover, there will be no possibility for children to educate in migration and displacement situations. These are just some of the injustices that women are experiencing in Afghanistan these days. However, the world has remained silent in the face of this oppression, and there is no serious action has been taken by international organizations to help Afghan women.

Afghans have been migrated to Iran for more than decades. Imam Ali Popular Students Relief Society, as a non-governmental organization in Iran, always supports Afghan women and children for many years through its various programs. These programs include social and economic empowerment and skill learning programs for immigrant women, through social entrepreneurship. Imam Ali Society has professional centers called “Employment Homes”, which provided the necessary training to these women in various fields of art such as cooking, sewing, needlework and all kinds of handicrafts, etc. and after a while, these women have been able to make a life for themselves and their children. In addition to employment services, these centers provide immigrant women support in health care, medicine, counselling, and psychiatry.

Considering that the Taliban is taking the power in Afghanistan these days and creating a new wave of migration to Iran, the Imam Ali Society has launched a project called “Kindness Without Borders” (Mehr Bi Marz) to support the education of children. In this program, volunteers who want to teach Afghan immigrant and refugee children from anywhere in the world hold online classes for Afghan immigrant children in Iran.

We hope to bring peace to the world, especially to Afghanistan. We call on all international and human rights organizations around the world to support the oppressed women of Afghanistan.
