

57th regular session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 6: UPR Adoptions
27 September 2024

JOINT STATEMENT ON AFGHANISTAN

Speaker: Negina YARI by video

This is a joint statement by ISHR, WILPF and FORUM-ASIA. It builds on the joint UPR submission by ISHR and WILPF¹ as well as on concerns raised by our three organisations in multiple occasions in the UN Human Rights Council and other forums.

The Taliban's imposition of misogynistic edicts, restrictions, policies and practices is relentless. Their acts of discrimination against women and girls are institutionalised and systematic and enforced with harsh methods.

Women and girls are subject to gender persecution, a crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to which Afghanistan is a party. Gender persecution is taking place within an institutionalised system of gender-based discrimination, segregation and oppression; meaning that the people in Afghanistan, particularly women and girls, are living under a regime of gender apartheid.

What we describe is not new. Widespread and systematic abuses and violations, in particular of the rights of women and girls, have been widely documented, analysed and reported on by the UN and civil society organisations. The Special Rapporteur's report A/HRC/56/25 is an example of that.²

We welcome UPR recommendations expressing concern about systematic, institutionalised and widespread violence against women and girls, as well as many calls to immediately repeal all discriminatory restrictions. We especially welcome Costa Rica's recommendation to "Remove misogynist restrictions and edicts", and concern at gender apartheid and generalised violence

¹ Available at <https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/ishr-and-wilpf-urge-states-to-use-afghanistans-upr-to-denounce-gender-apartheid/> and at https://www.wilpf.org/advocacy_documents/joint-submission-for-the-upr-of-afghanistan/

² "The phenomenon of an institutionalized system of discrimination, segregation, disrespect for human dignity and exclusion of women and girls", A/HRC/56/25, available at this [link](#).

against women and girls.³ We urge all States to condemn the situation for what it clearly is: gender apartheid. And there must be consequences, based on precedent from apartheid on racial grounds in South Africa.

The pursuit of justice for gender persecution and gender apartheid demands a multifaceted approach. This includes for the Human Rights Council to establish an accountability mechanism to engage deeper into investigations and evidence collection. These complementary measures can exert heightened pressure on the Taliban.

States and other actors, including international organisations and international financial institutions, must take active steps to address and put an end to ongoing gender persecution and gender apartheid and to avoid being complicit. No Member State should recognise the Taliban or normalise their illegal actions and oppression.

Finally, we urge you to continue to support Afghan women activists inside and outside the country and to ensure their full participation in all discussions about Afghanistan.

³ Recommendation 109.186 (“Remove misogynist restrictions and edicts and eliminate all barriers, restrictions and discriminatory practices that are based on gender and deny women and girls the exercise of their fundamental rights to education, employment, freedom of movement, peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, participation in public life and enjoyment of public spaces, culture and protection against domestic violence (Costa Rica)”; paragraph 84 (“Costa Rica expressed concern about the interruption of the rule of law and the continued and systematic human rights violations, including gender apartheid and generalized violence against women and girls”). See UN Report A/HRC/57/5, available at this [link](#).