



PeaceWomen Across the Globe
FRIEDENSFRAUEN WELTWEIT
نساء من أجل السلام عبر العالم
Femmes de Paix Autour du Monde
Женщины мира за мир на земле
MUJERES DE PAZ EN EL MUNDO
Mulheres pela Paz ao redor do Mundo
DONNE DI PACE NEL MONDO
ピースウーマン—国境を越え平和をつくる女たち
全球和平妇女

STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Women in Afghanistan are in grave danger. We call on the Swiss government and the international community to act.

The international community has failed Afghanistan and none more so than the women and girls. Over the past 20 years women have, to varying degrees, been able to exercise the rights that were taken from them during the Taliban regime. School enrolment of girls increased from 0 percent in 2001 to more than 80 percent in 2018. Young women have been studying at universities like Gawharshad University in Kabul where women make up more than one-third of the student body.

It is these Gawharshad students that we at PeaceWomen Across the Globe have been thinking of during these days of turmoil and trepidation. In the past two years we organised “Women and Peacebuilding” and “Gender and Peace” courses at Gawharshad. The courses were designed to build women’s confidence and deepen their knowledge of women’s rights with the aim of increasing their participation in peacebuilding and decision-making. The courses were an investment in the younger generation and in the future.

With these students in our hearts and all the women and girls of Afghanistan on our minds, we call on the Swiss government and the international community to act to safeguard their future.

While we commend the swiftness with which the Swiss government decided to issue humanitarian visas to local staff at the Swiss Cooperation Office in Kabul and to their nearest family members, we say: Switzerland can and must do more. As the depositary state of the Geneva Conventions, it must “walk the talk” of its humanitarian tradition.

- **As a matter of urgency, the Swiss government must increase the contingent of refugees from Afghanistan and issue humanitarian visas to women, girls, and members of the LGBTIQ community whose lives and freedoms are threatened.** Because the situation in Afghanistan is unlikely to improve, humanitarian visas must also be issued to female family members of Afghan citizens already residing in Switzerland – regardless of their status here. Their sisters, mothers, aunts, daughters and nieces must be able to find safety here.
- **Once in Switzerland, the Afghan refugees must receive comprehensive, psycho-social support that also considers the trauma they have experienced – in recent weeks and in the past 40 years of war, abuse of power and disrespect for humanity.**





The international community failed to see the peace process through to its stated end: a negotiated peace agreement has not been concluded. However, the process was flawed from the outset. A comprehensive peace process requires the equal and meaningful participation of women, marginalised groups, and all ethnicities. Only an inclusive peace process can lead to sustainable peace.

- **The international community must now monitor the “peaceful handover” that the Taliban have announced they will negotiate with the Afghan government.** The monitoring process must document all human rights violations across the country, with a particular focus on women’s rights. The international community must use all available channels to condemn such violations.
- A Taliban spokesman told the [BBC](#): “The [Taliban] policy is that women can have access to education and to work.” Years of experience have shown that there is a wide gap between official Taliban policy and the reality on the ground. In the past few weeks, the United Nations has received reports of violence against communities and women, destruction of homes, schools and clinics. **We expect the international community to hold the new government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to account, citing stated Taliban policy and promises for a peaceful transition.**

Bern, 17 August 2021