

Violation of Women's Rights in Afghanistan under the Taliban Rule

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Abstract: *This research is going to investigate the violation of women's rights in Afghanistan under Taliban rule. The issue is crucial because lots of articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention of Human Rights, and the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam regarding women's rights are violated by the Taliban. Articles 1 & 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Moshinsky, 1959), articles 2 & 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights (Hopkins, 1966), and article 1 of the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (Boersema, 2011) have emphasized on the equal rights, and prohibition of any types of discrimination between men and women while Afghan women under the control of the Taliban are just used for sexual desire, and have no rights. Even they are discriminated with men. So, doing such research clarifies all of the dimensions of the issue, and draws the attention of the international community, human rights organizations, and human rights activists to support human rights, especially women's rights in Afghanistan is not free of value. For doing this research, the researcher has tried to collect secondary data from books, national and international online journals, and websites.*

Keywords: Human Rights, Taliban, Islamic Emirate, Women, Afghanistan

1. Introduction

Since the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan on August 15, 2021, based on their anti-women ideologies, the Taliban have issued many undemocratic and non-humanitarian decrees which are opposite to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention of Human Rights, and the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, to impose restrictions on women in the field of politics, public space, education, rights to work, and their social lives.

In September 2021 through an official decree, the Taliban eliminated the Ministry of Women Affairs in Afghanistan and changed its name to the Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (*Taliban replaces ministry for women with 'guidance' ministry | Women's Rights News | Al Jazeera*, n. d.). Simultaneously, the Taliban banned girls' schools from 6th to 12th classes and gradually continued these restrictions. They have also closed the doors of public and private universities to female students, and prevented women from going to work, public parks, public baths, gyms, and libraries. In addition, women cannot go out of their homes without male guardians. Even, they have stopped issuing driving licenses for women as well.

To be honest, the Taliban are going to squeeze women from public lives. The Taliban want to send women to a black hole where there is no bright future or hope for them. Now Afghanistan has been changed into a prison for women.

So, doing such research to clarify the violation of women's rights in Afghanistan, and draw the attention of the international community to support them will not be out of value. As a researcher, I have tried to reflect on the real situation in Afghanistan, and collect data from books, national and international online journals, and websites.

1) Women's Rights in the International Documents:

The researcher has tried to consider women's rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European

Convention on Human Rights, and the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam.

a) Women's Rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on 10 December 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations with 30 articles (Nations, n. d.). This international document was proclaimed to act as a global road map for the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of all individuals (men and women) (*What is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? | Australian Human Rights Commission*, n. d.). According to article 1 of this convention, "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Article 2 emphasizes the entitlement of all rights and freedoms without any distinction including sex (gender). Article 3 mentioned the right to life, liberty, and security for every individual. Article 7 prohibited any type of discrimination between men and women, and emphasized equality toward the law. Article 13 (1) mentioned the freedom of movement inside the country. Articles 18 & 19 mentioned the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, and expression. Article 21 mentioned taking part in the government and equal access to public services. Article 23 (1) is about the right to work. Article 26 (1) has mentioned the right to education for everyone. Article 27 (1) emphasized the right to participate in the cultural life of the community for everyone (Moshinsky, 1959).

b) Women's Rights in the European Convention of Human Rights:

Article 1 of this convention emphasized the securing of rights and freedoms for everyone. According to article 5 (1), everyone has the right to liberty and security. Articles 9 & 10 mentioned freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and freedom of expression. Article 14 prohibited discrimination based on any issue whether it is sex, race, color, language, property, or minority. Based on article 2 of the Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, "No person

shall be denied the right to education.” Based on article 2 of Protocol No.4 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, everyone has the right to liberty of movement. Article 1 of Protocol No.12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms has prohibited any type of discrimination including sex (gender) (Hopkins, 1966).

- c) **Women’s Rights in the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam:** Article 1 of this Declaration emphasized equality in terms of human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination including sex (gender). Article 6 mentioned women’s and men’s equal rights in human dignity. Article 9 (b) says “Every human being has a right to receive both religious and worldly education from the various institutions of teaching, education, and guidance, including the family, the school, the university, the media, etc. Articles 13& 23 mentioned the right to work for both men and women including in public services, and prohibited any type of discrimination in this regard. Article 22 (a) emphasized the right to express his opinion freely but should not be contrary to the principles of Islam (Boersema, 2011).

2) Women’s Rights in Afghanistan under Taliban control:

On 15 August 2021 Taliban got control over Afghanistan. Because of the anti-women ideology of the Taliban, since the re-establishment of the radical government by this group in Afghanistan till now they have issued some undemocratic executive decrees in which women have been deprived of their fundamental rights.

Opposite to articles 1 & 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 1 & 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights, article 1 of Protocol No.12 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and articles 1 & 6 of the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, which emphasized on the equal rights, human dignity and prohibition of any types of discrimination based on any issue including sex (gender), Taliban believe on the unequal rights between men and women, and mostly they discriminate against women in their social, political, legal, and cultural lives. In this context, Nida Muhammad Nadeem the Minister of Higher Education of the Taliban has written on his social media (Twitter) a woman is a man’s farmland and she must serve a man, not be educated (*Taliban: Woman is a male plantation Vlavari+ Photo*, n. d.). In another message, he mentioned, if men work and study there is no need for women’s education and job. This is because in Islam man is responsible for the alimony of a woman, not vice versa (*Taliban’s Higher Education Minister: If men work and study, there is no need for women’s education and jobs*, n. d.). So, these messages are clear violations of women’s human dignity and a sign of their inequality with men or a kind of discrimination against women.

Articles 26 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights, and article 9 (b) of the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam emphasized the right to education for all

men and women, but opposite of these articles Taliban have banned female education which is a clear violation of human rights. Since the Taliban got control over Afghanistan, their religious leader has released an undemocratic decree to ban female education from 6th to 12th classes. Lots of voices from national and international stages have been raised for opening the schools toward girls, but none of these voices were heard. Furthermore, the Taliban have banned the doors of universities (public and private), and educational courses for females (*Taliban ban Afghan women from university education | Afghanistan | The Guardian*, n. d.) (*Afghanistan: Taliban ban women from universities amid condemnation-BBC News*, n. d.).

Opposite to articles 21 & 23 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and articles 13 & 23 of the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, the Taliban have banned women from working in national and international organizations which is clearly a violation from the human rights principles (*Taliban orders NGOs to send women workers home | Taliban News | Al Jazeera*, n. d.) (*Afghanistan: Taliban ban women from working for NGOs-BBC News*, n. d.).

Articles 18 & 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 9 & 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights, and article 22 (a) of the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam emphasized the right of the freedom of expression and thoughts. But, opposite of these articles, the Minister of Higher Education of Taliban Nida Mohammad Nadeem mentioned in his speech those who are going to destroy the Taliban regime (physically and verbally) are deserving of death (*Taliban’s higher education minister: The perpetrators of the destruction of the obligatory system are al-Qatal*, n. d.).

Articles 13 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and article 2 of Protocol No.4 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms mentioned the liberty of movement for everyone (men and women). But, women under the control of the Taliban cannot go out of their homes without male safeguard (*Afghanistan: Taliban barring women from leaving home with no male chaperone | The Independent*, n. d.). This decree is clearly a violation of freedom.

Opposite to Article 27 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which emphasized participation in the cultural life of the community for everyone, the Taliban have banned women from public parks (*Afghanistan: Taliban ban women from Kabul parks-BBC News*, n. d.), gyms (*Afghan women barred from gyms, Taliban official says | Taliban News | Al Jazeera*, n. d.), public bath (*Taliban bars Afghan women from gyms, public baths, parks and fairs | The Times of Israel*, n. d.), and library (*Kabul all-women library forced to close 6 months after opening | KabulNow*, n. d.). Furthermore, the Taliban have stopped issuing driving licenses to women (*Taliban stops issuing driving licences to women in Afghanistan: Report | World News-Hindustan Times*, n. d.).

Opposite to article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and article 5 (1) of the European Convention of

Human Rights which are emphasized liberty and security, the Taliban impose compulsory masks on female staff and invited female guests to the media programs (*Taliban Whips Out New Mandatory Mask Rule For Female Guests on TV*, n. d.), even in their social lives as well (*Taliban say female Afghan TV presenters must cover face on air | Reuters*, n. d.).

2. Conclusion

After the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan on 15/August/2021, based on the anti-women ideology some undemocratic, non-humanitarian decrees were released by this group. Through on, gradually women are deprived of their political, social, economic, and cultural rights.

On their first days of government, the Taliban eliminated some of the institutions which were responsible for the protection of human rights, especially women's rights. For example, the Ministry of Women's Affairs was eliminated from the executive branch and has changed its name to the Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice. Besides on, they also eliminated the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan. Furthermore, schooling girls from the 6th to the 12th class were banned to go to schools.

Over the time, girls are prevented from going to universities (public and private), and women are banned from public parks, public baths, gyms, and public libraries. In addition, women cannot go out of their homes without male safeguarding.

So, the lives of women in Afghanistan are like birds in cages which they cannot flow, and cannot enjoy their nature. Some national and international voices are raised to support the women and criticize the Taliban government for providing human rights/basic rights for the women, but none of these struggles led to the result.

3. Recommendations

- 1) Ignoring the presence of women in the field of politics and social, cultural and economic activities of society is impossible. Therefore, I would like to call upon each Afghan to support and stand shoulder-to-shoulder alongside the women of Afghanistan to raise their voices for their rights on the national and international stages.
- 2) International and humanitarian organizations should bring pressure upon the government of the Taliban to recognize women's rights and give the women back.
- 3) As the struggle requires sacrifices, Afghan women must accept these sacrifices to get their rights back, and never give up.

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