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ECOSOC 3

# Research Report

Topic 3: Reclaiming women's educational rights in Afghanistan



Angela Barrientos and Sakhi Dhagat

## Introduction:

Before the Taliban reoccupied all of Afghanistan last August, it promised that this time would be different: that in contrast to 20 years ago, girls and women would be attending educational institutions. The country's education ministry announced at the start of the year that girls of secondary school age would be allowed to return to class. However, tens of thousands of children over the age of 12 were sent home, making the start of the school year in the country's northern half a generation betrayed. The previous directive suggested that the ministry was satisfied that its requirements for reopening girls' schools, namely that girls of secondary school age be taught by female teachers and boys be taught in separate buildings, had been met. Girls' schools will remain closed until a new plan in accordance with "Sharia and Afghan tradition and culture" is developed. Girls' schools have remained open in some areas due to parental pressure and because the United Nations children's charity UNICEF has negotiated agreements that allow it to run schools in certain areas of the country. There is evidence that girls are attending schools and universities operating in Kabul, although without media exposure.

## Key Terms:

Sharia Law- is a religious law that establishes governing principles for spiritual, mental, and physical behavior that Muslims must follow. Sharia law, which is regarded as God's command for Muslims, is essentially Islam's legal system.

UNICEF- The United Nations Children's Fund originally known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, was created by the United Nations General

Assembly on 11 December 1946, to provide emergency food and healthcare to children and mothers in countries that had been devastated by World War II.

### Background Information:

During the reign of Amir Habibullah at the turn of the twentieth century, modern education was formally introduced in Afghanistan. The first modern secondary school in Afghanistan, Habibia, which opened in 1903, indicated positive points about the presence of Mahmud Tarzi (a modernist author) during Habibullah's reign. Tarzi, he continued, believed in women's ability to work in public positions. Tarzi believed that Islam did not deny men and women equal rights. For the first time, King Amanullah Khan, who ruled the country from 1919 to 1929, mandated primary school attendance for both males and females. He built girls' schools and sent some of them to Turkey to further their education. According to, Amanullah's most notable legacy was an education for girls. He went on to say that Masturat was the first girls' school in Kabul, which opened in 1921. A women's adult education center was also established in Kabul. Amanullah campaigned against the veil for women. He promoted girls' education throughout the country, spreading it from Kabul to other provinces, but the majority of the traditional population lives in rural areas, so he organized social movements to fight for communal education for girls. When Amanullah left Afghanistan in January 1929, one of the leaders of the anti-reform movement, Habibullah Kalakani, took control. During his nine-month reign, he put a halt to all modernization efforts, particularly those involving women's education. Nader Khan, who took power in 1929, was a more

conservative ruler than Amanullah. To appease the opposition, he closed all girls' schools for a period of time. Progressive gender-related policies were implemented throughout King Zahir Shah's reign (1933-1973), particularly in the 1950s under Prime Minister Mohammad Dawod's direction. Girls' schools were opened under Prime Minister Dawod's administration, women were hired to work, and women's participation in national development was encouraged. When President Dawod took over in 1973, he was a staunch supporter of modernization and female education. During his reign, the first institute for women was established within the Ministry of Education, and he had strategies for campaigns to promote female literacy. When the Communist regime took power in October 1978, they declared compulsory education, particularly for women, as anti-traditional and anti-religious, posing a challenge to male authority. More women than ever before enrolled in higher education in the 1980s. By the early 1990s, women constituted roughly 40% of the student body. Access to education was restricted during the Mujahideen era, from 1992 to 1996. The situation deteriorated during the Taliban's rule from 1996 to 2001, and women were expelled from educational institutions. Afghanistan had coeducational schools before the Taliban took over, and women made up 70% of teachers, 50% of the public sector, and 40% of the medical profession. The Taliban regime (1996-2001) prohibited women's education and closed all girls' schools, as previously stated. Many girls' schools have been destroyed, and the Taliban has threatened to kill female students who attend classes.

#### [Major Countries and Organizations Involved:](#)

Afghanistan- since reclaiming power in Afghanistan on the 15th of August 2021, the Taliban have significantly rolled back rights for women and girls. New rules limit where women can work, require women to cover their faces in public and prohibit women from traveling without a male escort. The extremist government has forbidden hundreds of thousands of girls from attending school.

United States of America- Since the Taliban's forcible takeover in August 2021, culminating in the fall of Kabul on August 15, the US has shifted to a pragmatic engagement in Afghanistan. The US has not yet decided whether to recognize the Taliban or any other entity as the Government of Afghanistan or as a component of such a government. The United States has made significant efforts in collaboration with the international community to assist the Afghan people during a time of humanitarian and economic disaster.

### [Women for Women International](#)

This is an organization that focuses on helping Afghan women to discover their power in a constructive and dignified manner. Their foundational training teaches women how to know and defend their rights, live mentally and physically healthy lives, influence decisions at home and in their communities, generate income, and save money for the future, all of which contribute to economic self-sufficiency in their lives and the lives of their families.

### [Relevant UN Resolutions:](#)

### [Womens-rights-in-Afghanistan-one-year-after-the-Taliban-take-over-](#)

This Gender Alert documents how changing dynamics in Afghanistan are impacting women`s rights and gender equality one year after the Taliban take-over of Afghanistan on 15 August 2021. This Gender Alert draws on secondary data published in the past year and insights from UN Women visits across provinces in 2022 and has found that the Taliban has not substantively changed its position on women`s rights.

### [Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan](#)

This is an ECOSOC Resolution from 2002/4 on the Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan guided by the Charter of the United Nations, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### Previous attempts to solve the issue:

By the end of 2001, the Taliban had been deposed. Many schools opened their doors to girls in the years following international intervention, and women returned to work. Women's rights were enshrined in a new constitution in 2003, and Afghanistan adopted the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) law in 2009.

### Possible Solutions:

Fund education without discrimination; Support communities as they fight for girls' right to education; Stand by Afghans under threat for defending the right to education; and Monitor all aspects of access to education are approaches that nations should take to promote access to education for girls and women in Afghanistan.

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