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# Kabul's Silent Crisis: Documenting Widespread Human Rights Violations Through Ground-Level Evidence

*(With Annexed Videos and Witness Reports for Investigative Verification)*

## Abstract

Since regaining control in August 2021, the Taliban regime has systematically dismantled nearly two decades of progress in Afghanistan. This paper examines pervasive human rights violations across the nation—including draconian restrictions on women's rights, forced disappearances, and gender persecution—within a geopolitical context in which international actors have indirectly enabled the regime's oppression. Grounded in UN and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) findings, the June 2025 Special Rapporteur report, and newly issued International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrants, the analysis weaves in primary visual documentation (see Annex A). The paper concludes with urgent calls for accountability, preservation of evidence, and global intervention.

## Introduction

After two decades of international engagement under the banners of *human rights, democracy, and counterterrorism*, Afghanistan today stands as a symbol of broken promises. The return of the Taliban in August 2021 was not simply the product of armed insurgency—it was the result of backroom diplomacy,

facilitated by corrupt Afghan administrations and enabled by U.S. foreign policy miscalculations. Former presidents **Hamid Karzai** and **Ashraf Ghani**, the latter elected through a deeply flawed and low-turnout process, were instrumental in weakening state institutions. But it was U.S. Special Envoy **Zalmay Khalilzad**, through the Doha negotiations, who gave the Taliban global legitimacy—misleading the world into believing they had changed. Khalilzad's role in the Taliban's return has sparked widespread condemnation. In an open letter supported by over 70 Afghan civil society and human rights organizations, he is accused of dismantling Afghanistan's legal system, whitewashing the Taliban's image, and enabling the collapse of the former government. The letter calls for his **international prosecution and investigation** of his affiliated media and financial networks [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#).

What followed was not peace, but the complete erasure of civil liberties—especially for women and girls. Under Taliban rule, females are banned from education, work, travel, and healthcare. Religious and ethnic minorities—particularly non-Pashtun and Shia communities—face enforced disappearances, floggings, and cultural persecution from Kabul to Herat, from Bamiyan to Dasht-e-Barchi.

The situation has taken an even darker turn. In recent weeks, young girls have been abducted from homes, schools, and clinics—many in broad daylight. These abductions are not anomalies; they are part of a systematic campaign of terror. The Taliban actively suppress news of these crimes, but videos and testimonies continue to emerge, revealing a regime built on fear and impunity.

Meanwhile, the **U.S. government continues to fund Taliban-controlled Afghanistan**, directly or indirectly, through weekly and monthly financial assistance drawn from American taxpayers. This “oxygen supply” sustains the very regime committing these atrocities. Without this financial support, the Taliban—widely hated by the Afghan population—would likely collapse under the weight of their own illegitimacy and brutality.

This report seeks to expose an urgent and grim reality: Afghanistan's suffering is not a cultural relapse, but the result of foreign-enabled repression. The international community—especially the United States—must be held accountable for its role and act now to stop the funding that empowers terror, silences women, and destroys lives.

Ethnic and religious minorities—particularly non-Pashtun communities—face targeted abductions, enforced disappearances, public lashings, and an all-out assault on cultural expression. These are not isolated abuses but part of a deliberate and institutionalized campaign—visible from Kabul to Herat, Mazar to Bamiyan, Takhar to Panjshir and Badakhshan, and most brutally in the Shia-populated areas such as Dashti-e-Barchi.

Among the most heartbreaking tragedies is the recurring abduction of young women and girls, often in broad daylight, from their homes, workplaces, and clinics. No charges are brought. No justice follows. Instead, haunting videos of weeping mothers, pleading fathers, and screaming youths circulate—testimonies that pierce the conscience of every free and humane observer.

This report seeks to expose a grim truth: what Afghanistan is enduring is not a mere cultural relapse but a consequence of international negligence, regional opportunism, and a systemic disregard for universal human dignity.

The Taliban’s resurgence in August 2021 marked the collapse of even the most modest civil gains—especially for women and girls. This is not localized repression. It is a nationwide system of control, affecting citizens from Kandahar to Jalalabad, from remote villages to urban centres. This report documents the scope of the repression, analyses its enablers—both internal and external—and calls on international institutions to move beyond statements of concern and toward tangible action for justice.

## **2. Nationwide Systematic Repression**

UN experts describe more than 80 decrees enforced by Taliban authorities that restrict Afghan women’s access to education, employment, public spaces, and freedom of movement; the measures include bans on parks, gyms, voice, and public presence, enforced through mandatory dress codes and social guardianship laws. These practices have led to Afghanistan being designated by the UN as the world’s most repressive country for women.

## **3. Arbitrary Detentions and Enforced Disappearances**

Arbitrary arrests and disappearances are routine, often triggered by minor infractions such as insufficient dress coverage or presence in public without male accompaniment. Detainees frequently face detention without charge, inadequate access to due process, and coercive release conditions.

These official abuses are corroborated by visual records in Annex A, including documented mass abductions of women from clinics, shopping areas, and restaurants in Kabul (see Annex A, Video #2 & Video #3), demonstrating coordinated enforcement of fear across diverse urban settings.

## **4. Legal Mechanisms and International Response**

### **4.1 Taliban Legal Framework as Instrument of Persecution**

A 16 June 2025 OHCHR report by Special Rapporteur Richard Bennett confirms that the Taliban have transformed justice institutions into tools for gender-based oppression, dismantling protections and institutional safeguards that supported women's rights before August 2021. These policies have been deemed to amount to gender persecution and institutionalized gender apartheid.

### **4.2 ICC Arrest Warrants: A Legal Milestone**

On 8 July 2025, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued warrants for arrest against Taliban Supreme Leader Haibatullah Akhundzada and Chief Justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani, citing crimes against humanity via systemic gender persecution, including depriving women of rights in education, family life, freedom of movement, expression, and privacy. This marked the first ICC legal action to formally recognize gender persecution as a prosecutable international crime.

States party to the Rome Statute are legally obliged to arrest these individuals if encountered within their territory, although enforcement remains uncertain.

## **5. Evidence: Visual Documentation and Eyewitness Reports**

The evidence compiled in Annex A offers critical audiovisual testimony consistent with UN documentations. These recordings—showing forced detentions across cities—provide vivid, on-the-ground confirmation of systemic abuses. For instance, scenes in Annex A, Video #2 depict coordinated mass arrests in urban public spaces, aligning precisely with UN human rights pressure points.

This section presents vital visual and testimonial evidence of the Taliban's ongoing campaign of violence, particularly targeting women and girls in Kabul and other regions of Afghanistan. These acts include abductions, arbitrary arrests, and public beatings, with a focus on silencing female voices and dismantling any form of resistance.

The attached videos and links (compiled in **Annex A**) serve as audiovisual testimony that aligns with verified documentation from the United Nations and international human rights observers. For instance, **Video #2** in Annex A vividly captures scenes of coordinated mass arrests in public spaces—clear indicators of systemic oppression. These videos reveal not only the Taliban’s brutal enforcement tactics but also their growing impunity in the face of international silence.

Additionally, these acts of violence are not limited to gender-based oppression. Reports confirm that the Taliban—acting as proxies for regional powers including the United States (through past involvement), Pakistan, and other strategic allies—are also engaged in the ethnic cleansing of non-Pashtun communities. These groups are being forcibly evicted from their ancestral homes and lands, a practice with deep historical echoes of demographic manipulation. Documentation of these land confiscations are detailed below

### **Video Evidence (Annex A)**

- [Video 1 – Forced Abductions in Kabul](#)
- [Video 2 – Mass Arrest of Women Protesters](#) (*Duplicate for emphasis or alternate upload link*)
- [Video 3 – Eyewitness Footage of Urban Crackdown](#)
- [Video 4 – Documentation of Taliban Raids](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/15gk2kbbxf/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1DJHhwi348/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1EPvysEGhz/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1B6guBjKRt/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

These videos links are essential to show in contextualizing the Taliban’s actions not just as isolated incidents but as part of a broader, institutionalized pattern of abuse.

## **6. Discussion: Mechanisms and Impacts**

### **6.1 State-Enabled Gender Apartheid**

Taliban directives have created an environment where women are effectively erased from public life. Bans on secondary education, employment, public

presence, and voice amount to state-sanctioned gender apartheid, enforced via administrative decrees and violent policing.

## **6.2 Dilemma of Humanitarian Aid**

While intended to mitigate the humanitarian crisis, global aid—including billions in UN-channelled funds—has been diverted through Taliban tax systems or central banking networks, thereby indirectly sustaining the regime.

## **6.3 ICC Accountability vs Impunity**

Despite the ICC warrants, the Taliban’s rejection of the court’s jurisdiction and international hesitancy to enforce arrests have limited the impact. Some states recognize or engage the regime diplomatically—which undermines justice demands.

## **6.4 Essential Role of Eyewitness Records**

Visual and first-hand documentation as seen in Annex A are indispensable tools for truth-telling and legal processes. These records should be preserved, verified for authenticity, and integrated into accountability frameworks.

# **7. Conclusion**

Afghanistan’s current crisis is not merely a humanitarian tragedy—it is a deliberate, systemic campaign of repression, with women and girls as its primary targets. The Taliban’s gender-based policies constitute crimes against humanity under international law, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Despite mounting evidence, enforcement mechanisms remain inadequate, and global accountability has yet to meet the gravity of the violations.

The Taliban’s collapse is not only possible—it is necessary. The international community, particularly the United States and allied democratic governments, must acknowledge that ongoing financial flows, humanitarian concessions routed through Taliban-controlled systems, and diplomatic ambivalence have effectively emboldened and legitimized a regime rooted in authoritarian rule and gender apartheid.

Severing these financial and political lifelines, rejecting normalization, and empowering civil resistance—especially women-led movements—are not simply moral imperatives. They are legal and strategic obligations consistent with international commitments, including the *Universal Declaration of Human*

*Rights, CEDAW, and the Geneva Conventions.* Continued inaction not only undermines these instruments but also risks emboldening other regimes to replicate such repression with impunity.

Afghan women and girls are not collateral victims of an internal conflict. They are defenders of fundamental rights, resisting on the frontlines of one of the most severe assaults on gender equality in the 21st century. Their persecution demands not symbolic concern but coordinated international justice: prosecution of perpetrators, forensic preservation of digital evidence, direct support for civil society, and sustained diplomatic isolation of the Taliban regime.

This is a defining moment for international law, human rights institutions, and democratic leadership. It is not only a call to action—it is a call to conscience. The Afghan people, especially its women and children, cannot endure another betrayal. History will not be kind to silence.

## **Call to Action and Policy Recommendations**

### **With Referenced Evidence and Annex**

The continued subjugation of Afghan women and girls under Taliban rule is not only a humanitarian catastrophe but a direct affront to international human rights standards and the global rule of law. Based on verified documentation, credible media investigations, and legal developments—including recent calls for accountability and arrest warrants issued or sought by international legal bodies—this report urges immediate, coordinated action from the United States Congress, international human rights institutions, and the wider global community.

#### **1. Suspend Financial Support to the Taliban**

All financial assistance that flows—directly or indirectly—through Taliban-controlled systems must be suspended. Multiple investigations, including humanitarian reporting and advocacy from Afghan civil society, confirm that funds are being used not for relief but to entrench repression (8AM Daily, Videos #5–6). It is unacceptable that U.S. taxpayer dollars or international aid resources could indirectly finance a regime actively persecuting women.

#### **2. Investigate Zalmay Khalilzad and Other U.S. Officials**

A full, independent inquiry should be launched into the role of former U.S. Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, whose engagement with the Taliban—

culminating in the 2020 Doha Agreement—paved the way for the regime’s return and the collapse of Afghanistan’s democratic institutions ([The National News, 2024](#)). Afghan civil society groups have formally called for his international prosecution for enabling gender apartheid ([MEMRI, 2024](#)).

### **3. Enforce International Criminal Court (ICC) Measures**

Following the International Criminal Court’s investigation into crimes against humanity targeting Afghan women and girls, all ICC member states must be prepared to arrest Taliban leaders—including Haibatullah Akhundzada and Abdul Hakim Haqqani—should they enter their territories (Washington Post, 2025, [The Guardian, 2025](#)).

### **4. Reform Humanitarian Aid Channels**

Reconstruct humanitarian frameworks to ensure aid reaches civilians without Taliban interference. This must include the use of third-party neutral organizations, rigorous transparency protocols, and digital traceability systems. Video evidence and testimonies confirm that the Taliban has used access to aid as a form of coercion and punishment, particularly against women and marginalized ethnic groups (Amu TV, Video #3).

### **5. Reject Normalization of Taliban Rule**

No government or international body should legitimize the Taliban as the rightful authority of Afghanistan while women are barred from public life, education, and civil participation. Public normalization only emboldens authoritarianism and weakens collective international commitments to gender equality and legal accountability.

### **6. Strengthen Afghan Civil Society**

Afghan women activists, educators, and grassroots organizations operate under severe threat. These civil actors must receive direct international support, emergency relocation options when needed, and secure platforms for advocacy and documentation. Multiple sources—including 8AM Daily, HUMA Media (Video #4), and Jomhor News (Video #7)—show how vocal civil society members are disproportionately targeted by the regime.

## 7. Preserve and Protect Evidence

Documentary evidence of Taliban abuses must be safeguarded. Human rights organizations, international NGOs, and journalists should urgently download, archive, and forensically authenticate the digital evidence detailed in Annex A. This includes video metadata such as timestamps, GPS coordinates, and source verification. Such material will be critical for future legal action and to counteract Taliban censorship or manipulation.

*The Taliban's collapse is not only possible—it is necessary. The international community, and particularly the United States, must recognize that the continuation of financial support and tacit diplomatic engagement has inadvertently legitimized a regime built on systematic gender persecution and authoritarian violence. Severing all funding streams that pass-through Taliban-controlled structures, refusing diplomatic normalization, and actively supporting Afghan civil resistance—especially women-led initiatives—are not just moral imperatives but legal and strategic obligations.*

This moment is a definitive test of the international community's commitment to the universal principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Continued inaction would represent a profound failure to uphold the rule of law and would embolden other regimes that seek to subjugate women and suppress democratic values.

Afghan women and girls are not merely victims of an internal political crisis—they are frontline defenders of human dignity. Their oppression signals not a local breakdown but a global crisis of accountability. As such, this is not only a geopolitical concern but a human rights emergency with international jurisdiction and responsibility.

The path forward requires decisive, coordinated measures: prosecuting perpetrators under international law, preserving and utilizing digital evidence, empowering civil society actors, and ending the enabling conditions that keep the Taliban in power. History will remember whether the world stood by or stood up. The Afghan people—especially its women and children—cannot endure another betrayal.

This is not only a call to action. It is a call to conscience.

### Key Recommendations

1. Enforce ICC Warrants  
Member states must arrest Taliban leaders Haibatullah Akhundzada and Abdul Hakim Haqqani under ICC mandates for gender persecution ([The Washington Post, 2025](#); [The Guardian, 2025](#)).
2. Reform Humanitarian Aid Channels  
Aid must bypass Taliban-controlled networks by using neutral third-party actors and embedding transparency and accountability measures.  
Evidence shows Taliban manipulation of aid access, especially targeting women (Amu TV – Video #3).
3. Reject Normalization of the Taliban Regime  
No diplomatic recognition should be granted to the Taliban until full civil and gender rights are restored.
4. Support Afghan Civil Society  
Channel direct resources to women-led organizations, educators, health workers, and local rights defenders who continue to resist Taliban repression on the ground (8AM Daily – Videos #5–6; Jomhor News – Video #7).
5. Preserve and Forensically Archive Evidence  
NGOs and journalists must securely download and verify video content (see Annex A) for legal accountability, using metadata to guard against manipulation or erasure.

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#### Annex A: Video Evidence of Taliban Abuses Against Women (2023–2025)

The following publicly available videos provide firsthand evidence of Taliban gender-based persecution:

1. Taliban Raid in Dashti e Barchi Targeting Young Women — *Video #1*
2. Over 100 Women & Girls Arrested in Shar e Naw, Kabul, Without Charges — *Video #2*
3. Amu TV Coverage: Women Detained from Restaurants, Clinics, Markets — *Video #3*
4. HUMA Media: A 17-Year-Old Girl’s Disappearance After Taliban Detention — *Video #4*

5. 8AM Daily Report: Mass Women Detentions in West Kabul — *Video #5*
  6. 8AM Daily Follow-Up: Human Rights Violations by the Taliban — *Video #6*
  7. Jomhor News: Taliban Detains Dozens of Girls in Western Kabul & Shar e Naw — *Video #7*
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