

HRD+ Statement on the Taliban Leadership's Decision to Ban Women and Girls from Obtaining Medical Education

'The Taliban's new decision will increase the mortality rate among Afghan women.'

The Taliban de facto administration has once again demonstrated its disregard for the fundamental needs of Afghan society. In yet another irresponsible act, the Taliban leadership has issued a decree banning medical education institutions from admitting women and girls to professional medical training programs. This decision has caused widespread shock and deep concern both nationally and internationally.

A pressing question arises: **how can the vast number of women suffering from physical and psychological issues in Afghanistan be saved from their current plight if they are denied the opportunity to acquire medical skills for treatment and care?** Meanwhile, many Taliban leaders' families reside abroad, unaffected by these severe social, economic, and cultural hardships. The primary victims of such inhumane decisions are Afghanistan's impoverished and destitute population.

Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal and newborn mortality rates in the world. Furthermore, the feminization of poverty in recent years has exacerbated health issues among women. The Taliban's prior policies have severely restricted women's access to healthcare facilities and treatment. In this context, shutting down women's medical education institutions and banning their studies will drastically reduce the number of midwives, further limiting access to safe childbirth services. As a result, women and newborns will face even greater risks of death during childbirth. It is clear that if the rapid imposition of restrictions on women's basic human rights is not halted, the entire society will suffer significantly.

HRD+ urgently calls on the international community, especially organizations involved in global health and humanitarian aid—including the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, **Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)**, the **European Union's Health Support Commission**, international oversight bodies for healthcare in impoverished nations, global humanitarian aid organizations, and human rights monitoring entities worldwide—to intervene immediately. We urge them to exert pressure on the Taliban to reverse this misguided decision. Additionally, we sincerely appeal to all global institutions to create opportunities for Afghan women and girls to pursue secondary and higher education in medical fields outside the country.

HRD+ strongly demands that the Taliban de facto administration reconsider this unjustifiable decision, which will severely harm Afghanistan's social fabric, and prevent further isolation of our country and people from the world.

Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+)