

51st session of the Human Rights Council

Enhanced ID on the human rights situation of women and girls in Afghanistan

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World Vision International and Save the Children witness daily the rapidly deteriorating situation facing women and girls in Afghanistan.

25 million¹ people in Afghanistan are estimated to be living in poverty and almost half of the population is projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity by November². 97% of households are unable to meet their basic needs.³ The humanitarian crisis is severely impacting children's ability to enjoy their rights. In a context where health services are severely disrupted, 3.2 million children are at risk of acute malnutrition in 2022, including over one million children projected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition.⁴ Children are missing school and vaccinations, and are increasingly experiencing psychological distress⁵. Many are becoming separated from their parents or caregivers⁶, while child labour is growing by the day. Child protection systems have been weakened, and the economic crisis, compounded by drought and hunger, is exposing children to greater protection risks⁷. Access to education remains elusive⁸, and 80% of girls are missing on secondary education.⁹

Across all areas, women and girls are disproportionately affected.¹⁰ Restrictive gender norms and practice compounded by economic pressure have led to a dramatic increase in negative coping strategies, including child marriage. New research found more girls are going to bed hungry than boys, girls are more likely to be out of school, and are showing signs of depression and anxiety¹¹. The economic pressures facing households are heightening risk factors affecting all children, but particularly girls. Restrictive policies on girls' education and women's ability to work and access basic services, are exposing women and girls to greater risks of violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation.

The compounding effects of the humanitarian, economic and human rights crisis are pushing children and particularly girls to a breaking point. In this regard, we urge Human Rights Council to:

- Call for the lifting of restrictions denying women and girls of their fundamental rights to access basic goods and services, including food aid, health, safe and quality education, and protection services.

¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/08/1124522>.

² 'Afghanistan IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis: March - November 2022' available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-ipc-acute-food-insecurity-analysis-march-november-2022-issued-may>

³ Save the Children 'Breaking Point: Children's lives one year under the Taliban rule', August 2022, available at https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Breaking-Point-Childrens-lives-one-year-under-Taliban-rule_Aug-2022.pdf/

⁴ UNICEF, "Afghanistan: Humanitarian Situation Report, Report #8, 1-31 July 2022," 31 March available at <https://www.unicef.org/media/125441/file/Afghanistan-Humanitarian-SitRep-No.8,-1-31-July-2022.pdf>

⁵ WVI 'Afghanistan: A Children's Crisis', August 2022, available at <https://www.wvi.org/publications/afghanistan/afghanistan-childrens-crisis>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/80-secondary-school-girls-afghanistan-missing-out-education-one-month-taliban-ban-extended>

¹⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/economic-and-food-crisis-afghanistan-impacts-women-and-girls>

¹¹ See footnote 3.



- Continue to call for the protection of freedom of movement for all, including women and girls, across the country and without discrimination.
- Strengthen accountability for child rights violations in Afghanistan through the systematic integration of both age and gender dimensions in monitoring and investigation efforts, including through resources and dedicated expertise to support the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.
- Call for unhindered humanitarian access for all those in need, especially girls and women. Such access must be safe, free, and available without discrimination.