

The Taliban and Women

By Brooklyn Nelson

As U.S. troops have recently left Afghanistan succeeding a 2020 peace deal made between former president Trump and the Taliban and continued by current president Joe Biden, Afghanistan dives back into a humanitarian crisis. Because of this, Afghan women fear deeply for their safety.

Terrorist group, the Taliban, emerged in 1994 not long after the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan after pursuing it as a new communist nation. They soon began reining control of the nation through civil war and violence once seizing the capital of Kabul. Before the Taliban empire, rights for women in Afghanistan were advancing with Afghan laws upholding gender equality and women already voting and possessing jobs in the government, education, and the medical field. When the Taliban took over the region, they built their legislation on strict interpretations of Islam with fundamentalistic beliefs that would strip women of their basic rights. The Sunni Islamic group required women to wear head-to-toe coverings known as burqas, which though were a component of the Islamic religion before the Taliban, were not required by law. Women were not allowed to study or work and not allowed to leave home without a male escort. Under additional laws, women were provided extremely inadequate healthcare with male physicians being prohibited from examining less than fully clothed female patients. Many conditions were left untreated because of this and because male chaperones were required for appointments. Furthermore, girls under the age of 16 were allowed, encouraged, and many times forced to marry Taliban fighters, leading to an extensive network of sex trafficking. All sources of Western media were outlawed including TV, music, and more. If any law was disobeyed, brutal punishment was practiced. Women, in particular, were publicly beaten, whipped, raped, and assassinated.

After the September eleventh attacks on the Twin towers in 2001, the U.S. became involved with their main goal being to execute Osama Bin Laden and abolish the terrorist group Al Qaeda. In time, the United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan and worked collectively to force the Taliban to retreat as well as aid Afghanistan in gaining governmental power back. Once the Taliban's ruling fell in 2001, the new 2004 Afghan constitution reimplemented womens' rights laws. Finally, women were back to not perfect, but better circumstances, until now.

The Taliban has been rooted in misogyny and male superiority. In 1999, a spokesperson from the Taliban even claimed that, "the face of a woman is a source of corruption," referring to that of non-family members. Though in a more recent news conference, spokesperson Zabihullah

Mujahid promised that the Taliban government will, “respect the rights of women within the framework of Islamic law,” it's unclear if it can be trusted as similar statements were made as women continued to be discriminated against. Women have already been forced out of their jobs by the Taliban as the group occupies more cities. Following the departure of U.S. troops in the country, countless people have been seen fleeing for their lives, clinging to planes to leave Afghanistan. Many have died doing so. The Taliban is a dangerous terrorist group that will stop at no end to acquire the country and carry out its ideals. This could very well mean that women today will face the same vicious laws that they faced throughout the 1990s.

To help you can:

- Call your local senators
- Inform others about the crisis
- Donate to [Women for Afghan Women](#), [The UN Refugee Agency](#), or [International Refugee Assistance Project](#)

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Seattle Afghan Refugees:

<https://www.thestranger.com/slog/2021/08/18/60483726/seattle-and-washington-state-scramble-to-assist-afghan-refugees>

"Meanwhile, Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA) in South Seattle is gearing up for longer-term services that will be required after refugees are here more than three months—including mental health counseling, social services, and assistance finding employment and permanent housing. "I feel for the Afghan people," said Mahnaz Eshetu, ReWA's executive director, who fled the Iranian Revolution as a child. "It is not easy to leave your country, especially for women. For the past 20 years, women were in the universities and now suddenly everything is closed to them."