A New Chapter in Afghanistan:
Ensuring International Cooperation in Support of
Afghan Women & Girls


Co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of the United Kingdom, the State of Qatar, and Canada to the United Nations, UN Women and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security

Date: Thursday 21 October 2021
Time: 3:00 – 5:00pm
Format: Hybrid

High-level representatives are invited to attend in-person in the Trusteeship Council Chamber. Please RSVP to charlotte.andrews@fcdo.gov.uk. Virtual participation will also be possible, with instructions to follow.

Afghanistan is facing an unprecedented humanitarian, economic and human rights crisis. For Afghan women and girls, the aftermath of the Taliban take-over has been particularly devastating. They had made impressive progress over the last twenty years, despite facing significant challenges. Women held nearly a third of the seats in the parliament, and 3.8 million girls attended school.

Now, many secondary girls’ schools are closed, while many women face restrictions on their ability to work. Journalists and judges, artists and activists are facing violence, threats, daily harassment and intimidation. Women and girls are no longer able to engage meaningfully in public life. Yet even in this context, women are taking to the streets peacefully across the country demanding their voices be heard.

Afghan women and girls deserve our attention and greater international cooperation to protect their rights. Human rights violations and abuses against women and girls also need to be closely monitored and addressed as a matter of priority.

This event is designed to bring together key stakeholders, including the Friends of Women in Afghanistan, Friends of Afghanistan, Friends of 1325, and regional partners. Afghan women leaders will share their personal experiences, offer their insights, and
recommend actions for a more cooperative, effective, and inclusive response to the situation in Afghanistan for women and girls.

Topics for discussion:

- **Upholding Human Rights and Women’s Rights**: The picture on the ground remains mixed, with contradictory statements and actions. How can women’s rights be monitored and how can the Taliban be held accountable for violations of international human rights laws? How can the international community best support the newly appointed Special Rapporteur deliver on their mandate?

- **Gender Responsive Humanitarian Assistance**: The worsening humanitarian crisis is having particularly dire consequences on the security and wellbeing of women and girls. Women aid workers must be allowed to work without restrictions to ensure humanitarian aid meets those in need. How can Member States and the UN system ensure gender-responsive delivery of humanitarian aid? How can women’s participation in decision-making and frontline aid be safeguarded?

- **Regional Cooperation**: Neighbouring countries will continue to play a leading role as a force for stability, economic support, and humanitarian response in the region. How can these Member States and regional partners play a key role in promoting women’s participation and protecting women’s security and rights?

- **Islamic Law and Protection of Women’s Rights**: Islamic governance and gender equality are not mutually exclusive. How can the international Islamic community and regional partners apply Islamic legal and theological arguments to promote and protect women’s rights in Afghanistan?

While Afghan women face daunting challenges, they are continuing to work and support each other by addressing critical needs. The international community’s commitment to the women and girls of Afghanistan is more urgently needed than ever.