

#InternationalWomensDay2022

#JusticeForTheWomenOfAfghanistan

WLUML
Women Living Under Muslim Laws

Demanding Justice, Freedom and Participation for the Women of Afghanistan

The events of 2021 and the return of the Taliban left us outraged and disheartened, but even more determined to struggle for gender justice and women's human rights. With increasing violence across diverse geographies, we want to remind the world that sustainable peace has to be at the top of the international community's agenda. A peace that is more than silencing guns, a peace that is just, and a peace with women's rights and human rights at its heart. Women everywhere, but especially in Afghanistan, have been struggling to bring peace and justice. Today, this International Women's Day, we share with you the stories of only eight of the thousands of inspiring Afghan women. After all, it was their collective strength and courage that transformed the legal rights of women, and who carved out opportunities for their education, political and legal representation, as well as economic activity.

Today we have shared the profiles of women who have tirelessly struggled for the advancement of gender justice and equality in Afghanistan, women who have faced seemingly insurmountable obstacles with bravery and conviction. To take just one example, Hamida Hamid's struggle for women's empowerment led to the creation of 8 day care centres in 8 girls high schools, the establishment of a 30 member strong gender committee providing training on gender awareness, and a Women's Resource Centre which provided female students fundamental IT skills. We salute the endeavours of women who struggled against the Taliban during their first regime, under the warlords, and the new generation who have taken up the struggles of their forebearers.

We celebrate their commitment and recognise that the struggle is far from over. With the Taliban once again in power, implementing their misogynistic gender ideology, Afghanistan faces an extremely difficult period in its history. Women are witnessing a return to gender apartheid policies with the rolling back of their hard-won rights, including access to education, work, and even the right to move and travel freely. Women in Afghanistan face economic hardship that threatens the health and wellbeing of their families. Human rights activists and journalists' lives are at risk as they face real and ever present threats.

The women who have left Afghanistan are now in exile and face new challenges in their daily lives within a new culture and country. Yet, they are mobilising their expertise and knowledge to advocate for all Afghan women by reaching out to the international community, publicising the news of atrocities, as well as of the bravery of women's resistance inside Afghanistan. They are reconnecting across the globe and reflecting on the past, determined that the future will include a democratic Afghanistan that enshrines women's equality.

As a transnational solidarity network WLUML has relaunched its campaign 'Demanding Justice, Freedom and Participation for the Women of Afghanistan' in support of the women of Afghanistan, reverberating their voices and their demands.

In solidarity,

Women Living Under Muslim Laws, 8th March 2022