



THESSISMUN



Rules of Procedure

UN Economic and Social Council



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1. Welcoming Letter

Dear delegates, we are honoured to welcome you to this year's edition of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). ThessISMUN2025 opens its doors to you once again and is more prepared than ever. It is our honour and pleasure, as members of the board, to welcome you to our committee, the Economic and Social Council, where challenging matters are going to be discussed, making your participation crucial for the debate during the days of the conference. We believe that your contribution to the committee will be significant and that you will handle every challenge to the best of your ability. As your Chairs, we will be at your disposal whenever you need us. As always, do remember that you will be representing your assigned country as a delegate and you will be counseling your fellow participants in order to compose a resolution on this year's topic: *Gender Equality and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5: Voice for women and girls in Afghanistan*. Remember that you need to understand your country's social, political and economic background, while also understanding its interests and views on the topic. Moreover, a thorough comprehension of the topic is of utmost importance and a deeper understanding of the structure of ECOSOC. Don't forget that a big part of the procedure is also the rules of procedure. Be sure to study and understand them for you to be able to participate and understand each part of the process.

Our goal is not only to reach an agreement between all countries, composing a resolution together, but also to do it in both a professional and friendly manner. Remember that only by cooperating and working with each other will we be able to exchange useful information, learn and socialize with one another and, most importantly, achieve the goals of this committee. With that being said, we highly urge you to both be well prepared for the session and conduct the latter with the highest respect and understanding for your fellow delegates and chairs.

For further familiarization with the topic and with the committee in general, we have composed this Study Guide to help you during your research and guide you throughout our session. Please, take the time to read and understand this Study Guide and the Rules of Procedure, both



of which will be valuable and of great assistance during the conference. We would like to remind you, again, that we are here to solve your problems and help you with your research, should you ask for it. To conclude, we would once again like to welcome you to ThessISMUN2025. We will do our best to ensure that you enjoy yourselves by making your experience as joyful as possible.

Best Regards,

Maria ALEXANDRIDOU (President)

Nikolaos Rafail KAVOURAS (Vice- President)



2. Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (referred to hereafter as ECOSOC) was established in 1945 and is one of the Organisation's six principal organs.

Its duties are described in Chapter X of the UN Charter. Among other things, it may undertake or initiate studies and reports, recommendations, resolutions and draft conventions, always in accordance with the matters falling within its competence, i.e. international economic, social, cultural, educational and health matters. ECOSOC is inextricably linked to the purposes of Article 1, para. 3 in the UN Charter and therefore as the main organ for achieving these goals.

ECOSOC is in constant interaction with civil society in order to achieve these goals. It is a global forum for productive dialogue between politicians, parliamentarians, scientists, foundations, business, youth and more than 3,200 registered NGOs. ECOSOC's current objective is to promote the three dimensions of sustainable development.

There are fifty-four (54) members of ECOSOC, with the possibility of re-election and with only one representative per Member State. Each Member has one vote and decisions of the Council shall be taken by a majority of the members present and voting.

ECOSOC brings together and provides overall guidance and coordination for a wide range of subsidiary bodies and UN agencies committed to sustainable development. These include regional economic and social committees that facilitate intergovernmental discussions on major global issues, expert panels that develop key global standards, and specialized agencies, programmes and funds that operate around the world to translate development commitments into real changes in the lives of people.



Reforms over the past decade have strengthened ECOSOC's leading role in identifying emerging challenges, promoting innovation and achieving balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental - in particular through General Assembly resolutions 68/1, 72/305 and 75/290A. The 2021 review, which was conducted together with the resolutions on the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), reinforced ECOSOC's Charter mandate as a coordinating, convening and specialized body for political dialogue, policy-making and consensus-building to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other major UN conferences and summits under its purview. In this way, resolution 75/290A has strengthened the coordinating role of the Council and has also reinforced its consultative nature. In addition, resolutions 75/290A and 75/290B strengthened coordination between the work of ECOSOC and the HLPF¹.

3. Introduction to the Topic Area

Gender equality is at the heart of the United Nations (UN) values and gender-based discrimination has been prohibited by almost every treaty regarding human rights. The UN has shown its commitment in protecting women and girls all around the world through a strong legislative and institutional framework, which is constantly developing and strengthening. There are many places in the world where women and girls are deprived of their human rights, one of these places being Afghanistan. Gender equality used to be more enriched in Afghanistan, especially after the new constitution in 2004 that reserved to Afghan women 27% of the seats in the parliament and, by 2021, 60 out of 249 seats in the parliament were secured for them. There were human rights commissions protecting and helping women and girls and laws that considered violence against women as a crime, but women were not only visible or protected in politics or laws but everywhere. Under the Taliban's authoritarian rule since August 2021, women and girls in Afghanistan have been suffering enormously, making the

¹ 'High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development', accessed 27 January 2025, <https://hlpf.un.org/home>.



situation in the country one of the world's most serious women's rights crises². The outcome of the Taliban rule is the "imprisonment" of women within the walls of their homes since they are deprived of schooling, banned from all of everyday activities and because of "The law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice" the already severe restrictions have been extended³. Now it is also mandatory for women to be covered at all times, with face covering being essential as well, and their voice is considered to be intimate⁴. Thus, they are not allowed to be heard speaking, singing or reading out loud in public⁵. With that being said, due to the Taliban rule women in Afghanistan have been silenced and deprived of their autonomy while turning into faceless and voiceless beings.

4. Key Terms and Definitions

Gender equality: the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in the home, community and society. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female⁶.

Women's rights: According to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, it's the abolition of existing laws, customs, regulations and practices which

² Mukhtar, Ahmad. 2024. "Afghanistan after 3 Years of Taliban Rule: Women Silenced and Oppressed as ISIS and al Qaeda Regroup." 2024. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/afghanistan-taliban-new-rules-women-rights-quashed-isis-al-qaeda-regroup-3-years/#:~:text=The%20new%20government%20has%20issued,advocate%20for%20their%20fundamental%20rights>

³ CNN Associated Press. 2024. "Taliban Bans the Sound of Women's Voices Singing or Reading in Public." 2024. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/08/22/middleeast/taliban-law-women-voices-intl-latam/index.html>

⁴ Ochab, Ewelina. 2024. "Taliban's Law Promoting Virtue And Eliminating Vice Or As We Call It - Gender Apartheid." 2024. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2024/08/26/talibans-law-promoting-virtue-and-eliminating-vice-or-as-we-call-itgender-apartheid/>

⁵ Ochab, Ewelina. 2024. "Taliban's Law Promoting Virtue And Eliminating Vice Or As We Call It - Gender Apartheid." 2024. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2024/08/26/talibans-law-promoting-virtue-and-eliminating-vice-or-as-we-call-itgender-apartheid/>

⁶ Rui Nomoto, 'Gender Equality: GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS', *GENDER EQUALITY*, n.d.



are discriminatory against women, and establishment of adequate legal protection for equal rights of men and women⁷.

Gender-based violence (GBV): An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution, domestic violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, honour killings and widow inheritance⁸.

Purdah: a Muslim practice that involves the "isolation" of women from public observation by wearing concealing clothing and by the use of high-walled enclosures and curtains within their houses⁹.

Sharia Law: Islam's legal system, derived from the Quran, Islam's holy book, as well as the Sunnah and Hadith, which are the deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. Its literal translation from Arabic is "the clear, well-trodden path to water"¹⁰.

Femicide: the killing of a woman by an intimate partner and the death of a woman as a result of a practice that is harmful to women¹¹.

⁷ 'WomenRightsAreHR.Pdf', accessed 27 January 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Events/WHRD/WomenRightsAreHR.pdf>.

⁸ Nomoto, 'Gender Equality: GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS'.

⁹ 'Purdah | Veil, Seclusion & Gender Roles | Britannica', 11 December 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/purdah>.

¹⁰ 'What Is Sharia Law? What Does It Mean for Women in Afghanistan?', *BBC News*, 7 May 2014, sec. World, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-27307249>.

¹¹ United Nations, 'Behind Closed Doors: The Deadly Reality of Femicide', United Nations Western Europe, 25 November 2024, <https://unric.org/en/behind-closed-doors-the-deadly-reality-of-femicide/>.



5. Historical Background

While a traditional patriarchal structure has always characterised Afghanistan, there were some progressive steps and reforms taken as early as the 1920s when women became eligible to vote and gained access to education followed by the abolition of purdah (veiling) and allowing women to actively participate in public life, in the 1950s¹². Furthermore, in the 1970s, the communist regime promoted women's rights, introducing compulsory education for girls¹³. Any such steps have been quite fragile and the Soviet invasion and the civil war that followed reversed most of those progressive social accomplishments¹⁴.

During the Taliban Rule (1996-2001), most of those rights were regressed and/or revoked. The Taliban enforced strict segregation, banned girls from education, and confined women back to their homes¹⁵. These draconian measures had a devastating impact on Afghan women and girls¹⁶.

Following the US-led intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, a series of women's rights safeguards were incorporated into the then-adopted Afghan constitution, including the right to education, employment, and political participation. Despite the progress made on the legal framework, the limited access to justice and the unsurpassed cultural perceptions on that matter did not allow the status of women's rights in Afghanistan to be unchallenged.

The return of the Taliban regime in 2021 has reversed most of those achievements, restricting the rights of women and girls; girls are barred from secondary education, women are banned

¹² redpepper, 'Afghanistan: A Brief History', *Red Pepper* (blog), 24 May 2009, <https://rpdev2023.redpepper.org.uk/global-politics/war/afghanistan-a-brief-history/>.

¹³ 'Women in Afghanistan: The Back Story', accessed 27 January 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/womens-rights-afghanistan-history>.

¹⁴ 'Reimagining Women's Rights in Afghanistan: Federalism as a Pathway to Gender Equality', 16 August 2024, <https://www.jurist.org/commentary/2024/08/reimagining-womens-rights-in-afghanistan-federalism-as-a-pathway-to-gender-equality/>.

¹⁵ 'Taliban's Attack on Girls' Education Harming Afghanistan's Future | Human Rights Watch', 17 September 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/17/talibans-attack-girls-education-harming-afghanistans-future>.

¹⁶ 'The Fate of Women's Rights in Afghanistan', Brookings, accessed 27 January 2025, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-fate-of-womens-rights-in-afghanistan/>.



from employment in most sectors, and their rights for movement in public is severely limited. These policies have reversed decades of progress and created a humanitarian crisis for Afghan women and girls that still goes on¹⁷.

ECOSOC has played a crucial role in addressing gender equality issues in Afghanistan, particularly through its support for UN Women and other agencies working on women's empowerment and human rights. However, the current situation presents a significant challenge to ECOSOC's efforts to promote gender equality and protect the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan.

6. Legal Framework

The protection of someone encompasses all the actions with the aim of fully respecting their rights without any kind of discrimination and this is at the epicenter of human rights and the legal framework regarding the protection of individuals. Gender equality and women's rights are above all human rights. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."¹⁸. According to the UDHR, human rights are inherent and individuals, or even groups, cannot give them up, nor can others take them away. More specifically, when it concerns women's rights:

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**: adopted in 1979 in order to strengthen the provisions of already existing international bodies so as to eliminate discrimination against women and, thus, to achieve gender equality¹⁹.

¹⁷ 'Afghanistan', accessed 27 January 2025, <https://medicamondiale.org/en/where-we-empower-women/afghanistan>.

¹⁸ Éric Puybaret, *Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme* (Paris: Gautier-Languereau, 2008).

¹⁹ United Nations, 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979', accessed 28 January 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>.



- **Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women:** adopted in 1993, emphasised even more the fact that violence against women is not just a human rights abuse but also a serious obstacle against the realisation of many women's rights²⁰.
- **Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000):** adopted in 2000, restated that civilians, most specifically women and girls, are the most negatively affected by conflicts. This Resolution called for measures to help women be more equally represented in all stages of the peace process²¹.

Last but not least, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional body of the Economic and Social Council, established by Resolution 11 (II) of 21 June 1946. The CSW is a global intergovernmental instrument dedicated to promoting women's rights and women's empowerment. It documents the reality of women's and girls' rights worldwide and sets global standards on gender equality²².

²⁰ 'Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women', accessed 28 January 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-elimination-violence-against-women>.

²¹ United Nations Security Council, 'Resolution 1325 (2000)', accessed 28 January 2025, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n00/720/18/pdf/n0072018.pdf>.

²² 'Commission on the Status of Women | UNFCCC', accessed 28 January 2025, <https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/events-meetings/women-s-empowerment-climate-in-the-un/commission-on-the-status-of-women>.



7. Main discussion of the topic

7.1 The current regime in Afghanistan – Women's rights

The lack of cohesion in Afghanistan in many different sectors (such as internal and external politics, international recognition, human rights, security issues and economic issues) is the outcome of the Afghan Taliban's rule. With that being said, it is evident that the current regime in the country is facing multiple challenges in several sectors, with the economic and social issues playing an important role. After the Taliban rule, the Afghan economy is being led to collapse due to the fact that unemployment is growing and most of the Afghan people are unable to find any job²³.

According to the World Bank, the uncertainty after the events of August 15, 2021, led to declines in investment confidence and thousands of highly skilled Afghan people fled the country. In this period, the households that did not have enough income in order to meet the basic needs, specifically food needs, doubled and went from 16% to 32%²⁴. Today, from an economic point of view, Afghanistan's economy remains uncertain with stagnancy being an important threat until 2025²⁵.

With regards to women's and girl's rights, the Taliban's views on education show that they have been discouraging and limiting girl's participation in education, while stating that they will allow girls to continue their education only if the principle of Purdah is implemented²⁶. The supreme leader of Afghanistan, Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada, issued a new law on 21

²³ Khan, Aamir, and Aqsa Durrani. 2024. "The Future of Afghanistan under Taliban-Led Regime: Challenges and Likely Scenarios." 2024. <https://ideapublishers.org/index.php/lassij/article/view/1007/458>

²⁴ World Bank. 2024. "The World Bank in Afghanistan." 2024. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview#1>

²⁵ World Bank. 2024. "The World Bank in Afghanistan." 2024. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview#1>

²⁶ Khan, Aamir, and Aqsa Durrani. 2024. "The Future of Afghanistan under Taliban-Led Regime: Challenges and Likely Scenarios." 2024. <https://ideapublishers.org/index.php/lassij/article/view/1007/458>



August 2024 that underlines the duties, powers and punishments of those enforcing it. The new law says that the enforcers should respect everyone's human dignity and social status and gives them extensive powers to punish those who defy them²⁷. Many acts are forbidden or obligatory, such as the following: adultery, fornication, gambling, animal fighting, befriending non-Muslims or dealing harshly with orphans²⁸. The law also orders women to cover entirely both their bodies and faces and not speak or sing loud enough so that members outside their families cannot hear them²⁹.

From its past history, it is clear that the governance and the vision for society of the Taliban has at its epicenter the oppression of women and girls. Between 2001 and 2021 Afghanistan had made a lot of progress regarding gender equality, but the situation in the country clearly deteriorated since the takeover. After 2021, women lost their jobs in government and their place in the private sector³⁰. In 2023, the country was ranked last in the Women Peace and Security Index and continues to have one of the highest rates of gender-based violence over a woman's lifetime³¹. There have also been restrictions on women's freedom of movement. In some districts, women have been even told not to leave their homes unless it is completely necessary and in many cases women traveling solo are being questioned³².

²⁷ Afghanistan Analysts Network. 2024. "The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law." 2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/political-landscape/the-propagation-of-virtue-and-prevention-of-vice-law-translated-into-english/>

²⁸ Afghanistan Analysts Network. 2024. "The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law." 2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/political-landscape/the-propagation-of-virtue-and-prevention-of-vice-law-translated-into-english/>

²⁹ Afghanistan Analysts Network. 2024. "The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law." 2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/political-landscape/the-propagation-of-virtue-and-prevention-of-vice-law-translated-into-english/>

³⁰ UN Women. 2024. "Afghanistan: Gender Country Profile 2024." 2024. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/Gender-country-profile-Afghanistan-en.pdf>

³¹ UN Women. 2024. "Afghanistan: Gender Country Profile 2024." 2024. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/Gender-country-profile-Afghanistan-en.pdf>

³² UN Women. 2024. "Afghanistan: Gender Country Profile 2024." 2024. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/Gender-country-profile-Afghanistan-en.pdf>



To conclude, Afghanistan has been one of the lowest-scoring countries worldwide across multiple different gender equality indicators in recent years. The hard-fought progress between 2001 and 2021, is going backwards and is being erased from the Afghan landscape under the new regime.



7.2 The implementation of Sharia Law: social, cultural, and religious barriers

Since the emergence of the Islamic legal system, women have had economic rights, political rights, family rights (e.g. the right to choose a spouse), judicial rights, and religious rights, according to the religious texts. When it comes to the political system, women have a role and a position in the political and social arena equal to that of men. At the top of the pyramid of social issues are political and governmental issues in which women should intervene and play a role, in equal standing to men. Furthermore, it is said that Aisha, who was the wife of the Prophet Muhammad, was the leader of one of the major factions in the first armed political conflict and her companions obeyed her. According to these, it can be clear that even during the infancy of the Islamic religion, women had an imperative role in political fields and were present and active in all fields of life³³.

Apart from the political aspects, women's economic rights in Islam are also ones that should not be overlooked. Women gain their economic and their financial rights and not even their fathers and husbands could interfere in women's financial affairs³⁴. Among their economic and financial rights are also: the principle of a woman's inheritance, the right of ownership and the dowry.

Regarding the Taliban rule and the practice of Sharia law, it is obvious that they do not respect any human rights norm since they have arrested and tortured women who protested in order to protect their rights to work and education, something that is against religion and human rights³⁵. According to the Islamic law, harassment, humiliation and insulting of women are forbidden and, on the contrary, it considers women's human rights and gives them the opportunity and the right to participate in politics, to study and, of course, to play their role in society

³³ Omirzhanov, Yesbol, Marwa Ghyasi, and Binur Bertayeva. 2023. "Taliban's Misconception of Islamic Law in Treatment with Women Rights." 2023. file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/SJHSS_85_122-131_REIIOdE11.pdf

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid



additionally to their responsibility as a woman and a mother³⁶. With that being said, Taliban's version of "Islamic Law" actually differs from the Sharia Law in other Islamic countries (such as Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates that implement Sharia Law and women are present in the political, social and educational fields)³⁷. As a result, the Taliban's version of Islamic laws is in contradiction with Islamic rules and human rights.

7.3 The rules of the Afghan regime – consequences in daily life

The legal framework and social order in Afghanistan changed in 2021 when the Taliban reclaimed control over the country and imposed their own version of the Sharia legal code. This order has had a severe effect on everyday life, mostly for women and girls, by reversing freedoms and rights that had advanced in the past two decades. The results of these policies have posed problems on the sociocultural, political, and economic aspects, greatly impacting the Afghan community.

7.3.1 Social Consequences

Under the current regime, it strictly regulates the lives of women and girls. More specifically:

- Severe limitations on education³⁸: Girls are barred from secondary education, a fact that not only reduces their social mobility but also limits future opportunities. The immediate development of young girls is severely undermined, and in extension the Afghan society suffers in the long-term, when half of the country's population is denied access to education.
- Restrictions on movement³⁹: Women must be accompanied by a male relative in order to travel. Women's independence and ability to participate in public life is heavily limited. Shopping, healthcare access, and social gatherings, are included to those

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Omirzhanov, Yesbol, Marwa Ghyasi, and Binur Bertayeva. 2023. "Taliban's Misconception of Islamic Law in Treatment with Women Rights." 2023. file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/SJHSS_85_122-131_REIIOdE11.pdf

³⁸ 'Taliban's Attack on Girls' Education Harming Afghanistan's Future | Human Rights Watch'.

³⁹ 'Afghanistan'.

limitations thus furthering the marginalization of women from social life and personal wellbeing.

- Enforcement of conservative dress codes⁴⁰: Imposing mandatory wearing of the burqa or other full-body coverings acts as a symbolic reminder of women's diminished role in society. Women are also expected to maintain modest behavior in public spaces, under the constant threat of moral policing.
- Increased domestic violence and forced marriages⁴¹: With the severe limitation on women's legal protection and social marginalization, domestic violence, child marriage, and forced marriages have increased. Women and girls have no access to institutional mechanisms to report or combat such abuses, while such behaviors have been reinforced under the imposed patriarchal control exercised under Taliban rule.

To sum up, the Taliban's rule has created a social reality that removes women from public life and marginalizes them, re-introducing the pre-existing traditional gender norms and reversing the social progress that was accomplished under the previous regime.

7.3.2 Political Consequences

Further to social marginalization, under the Taliban regime, women and minorities have been excluded from political participation and governance:

- Exclusion of women from politics⁴²: Women have been prohibited from occupying any formal political office. While women held positions in parliament, the judiciary, and public offices, during the previous regime, they are no longer allowed to serve in government roles, eroding gender representation and limiting voices in decision-making processes.

⁴⁰ 'The Fate of Women's Rights in Afghanistan'.

⁴¹ 'Women in Afghanistan'.

⁴² Ibid



- Dissolution of the parliamentary quota system for women⁴³: The quota system, which reserved a certain percentage of parliamentary seats for women, has been abolished. Women's perspectives and interests are not represented any more to the legislature.
- Increased political repression: The Taliban have imposed an authoritarian political system; any form of protest is harshly suppressed. Political activists, especially women and women's groups rights advocates, face imprisonment, torture, or forced disappearance.
- Marginalization of civil society⁴⁴: Civil society organizations (CSOs) have been severely restricted or even forced to shut down, especially those focused on human rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment. While these organizations had played a key role in promoting political awareness among women, fostering social change, under the Taliban's rule, their current influence has been diminished.

Overall, the pursuit of a traditionally patriarchal, male-dominated, highly centralized political system from the Taliban's regime has effectively silenced women and civil society from participating in the governance of Afghanistan, making it heavily repressive.

7.3.3 Economic Consequences

The policies adopted by the Taliban have created an impaired society and a restrictive political system that consequently limited the real capacity of Afghanistan's economy, particularly on women's participation in the labor market:

- Women banned from many jobs⁴⁵: Women are restricted from working in most sectors, including public administration, healthcare, education, and international organizations. Women who previously had careers in these fields have been forced out of the workforce, crippling respective organizations and businesses and driving their families to impoverished states.

⁴³ 'The Fate of Women's Rights in Afghanistan'.

⁴⁴ 'Taliban's Attack on Girls' Education Harming Afghanistan's Future | Human Rights Watch'.

⁴⁵ 'Women in Afghanistan'.



- Impact on household incomes⁴⁶: With the prohibition of women to working, there is a significant drop to household income and thus a drastic reduction in financial stability. In many cases, families that had been slowly rising out of poverty during the post-2001 period have reverted to subsistence-level living, unable to maintain basic needs.
- Disruption of international aid and sanctions⁴⁷: The International sanctions and the freezing of Afghanistan's assets that have been imposed to the country, because of the limitations on human rights, have led to a collapse of the banking system and restrictions on foreign aid have worsened the country's already fragile economic state. Many of the projects that employed women, particularly in the development sector, have been put on hold, further deepening the economic crisis.
- Agricultural dependency and labor exploitation⁴⁸: Afghanistan's rural economy has become even more dependent on agriculture, where women often contribute to unpaid labor on family farms. The limited protection of rights and the lack of formal employment has many women pushed into exploitative labor conditions.
- Reduced access to markets and entrepreneurship for women⁴⁹: The strict rules regulating women's movement and participation in the economy have led to the closure of many women-owned businesses, especially in sectors like textiles, crafts, and services

In sum, the economic consequences of the Taliban regime's rules have reversed many of the gains women had made in terms of economic independence and severely harmed the national economy. This has contributed to worsening poverty levels across the country, especially in households and communities where women were previously key earners.

⁴⁶ 'Taliban's Attack on Girls' Education Harming Afghanistan's Future | Human Rights Watch'.

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ 'Reimagining Women's Rights in Afghanistan'.

⁴⁹ 'Taliban's Attack on Girls' Education Harming Afghanistan's Future | Human Rights Watch'.

7.4 Key Stakeholders

In the case of women's rights in Afghanistan, the main stakeholder are Afghan women because of the fact that since August 15 2021, many of the Taliban's policy announcements have been negatively impacting women with increased restrictions and with the violation of multiple basic rights such as the right to education, to work or even to movement⁵⁰. Despite the Taliban's vision of women's place in society, Afghan women are the ones who have directly confronted the Taliban. Afghan women challenged them by protesting in Kabul, Herat and other Afghan provinces⁵¹.

Another key stakeholder, that is also playing a very important role in the situation in Afghanistan, are armed resistance movements. Since 2021, there have been sporadic armed resistance against the new regime in many Afghan regions (especially in the Northern, Eastern and Southern regions). For example, the National Resistance Front (NRF) of Afghanistan was formed after the Taliban took power in 2021 and it consists of former civilians, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) personnel and former members of the opposition who all support the previous Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and are opponents of the Taliban⁵². The NRF is led from headquarters that are located in Tajikistan⁵³. Its main goal is to seize control

⁵⁰ Amini, Sadiq. 2023. "HOLDING THE TALIBAN TO ACCOUNT: STAKEHOLDERS IN AN INCLUSIVE POSTSETTLEMENT AFGHANISTAN." 2023. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ca0ec9b809d8e4c67c27b3a/t/655e59a44d4eeb5e8b488434/1700682148851/Digital-ORF-Afghanistan-Report.pdf>

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² European Union Agency for Asylum. 2023. "Armed Groups Resisting the Taliban." 2023. <https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-afghanistan-2023/23-armed-groups-resisting-taliban>

⁵³ Ibid



of the territory that is being controlled by the Taliban government, and it is the most well-developed anti-Taliban resistance movement in Afghanistan⁵⁴.

Moreover, the Taliban's regime and the draconian restrictions regarding women's and girl's rights have extended as the years pass by and they have an impact on the help given to Afghan people by the international community and international organizations, such as the United Nations. They banned women from working outside their homes and even included UN jobs, creating challenges in delivering humanitarian help. Restrictions on girl's education expanded as well and a bit later on international NGOs and UNICEF led programmes were banned from delivering community-based education⁵⁵. On the contrary, they were requested to transfer the programmes to the local organizations⁵⁶. Many UN agencies reported an increase in forced marriage, gender-based violence and femicide and dissolved the framework that supported the survivors of gender-based violence⁵⁷.

8. Conclusion

The matter for gender equality in Afghanistan should serve as a point of reflection for the challenges faced by millions of women and girls across the globe, especially from regions and communities affected by violence and oppression. The extreme oppression enforced on Afghan women and girls makes the case for solidarity across the world, and enforcement of their basic rights, even more compelling. Sustainable Development Goal 5 aims at the empowerment of all women and girls, however, the situation in Afghanistan calls for a more robust response to tackle the structural inequalities, barriers to education and employment opportunities, and marginalization of their voices from the public sphere. More active participation of women to

⁵⁴ European Union Agency for Asylum. 2023. "Armed Groups Resisting the Taliban." 2023.

<https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-afghanistan-2023/23-armed-groups-resisting-taliban>

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Ibid



Afghanistan's social and public life, governance and economy would assist the country to improve its international status and reverse the suffering of its economy.

It is the responsibility of the delegates of this committee to come up with solutions that not only tackle the ongoing crisis but also contribute to the long term transformation of the situation. Through promotion of diplomatic relationships, provision of humanitarian assistance and policy advocacy, a day will be reached where the rights and dignity of Afghan women and girls are respected in totality. The successful work of ECOSOC is an important move not just to reaffirm the global stance on gender equality but also ensure that everyone is carried along in the process.



9. Points to be addressed

1. How effective are current legal frameworks and international partnerships regarding women's and girl's rights?
2. What is the role of the current regime in Afghanistan and how does it influence women's and girl's rights?
3. According to the Women Peace and Security Index, Afghanistan is ranked in the last place when it concerns women's security. How could gender-based violence be eliminated in the country?
4. What is the role of Sharia Law and could Taliban's practices be in accordance with it when we address the issue of human rights in the country?
5. How do socio-economic conditions, the political regime and cultural practices play a role in this issue?
6. How could the Economic and Social Council coordinate support to Afghanistan with the help of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that recognises the need to promote peaceful and inclusive societies?
7. In the context of the role of the United Nations development system, what measures could be implemented to help Afghan women "regain" their rights?
8. What further measures could be taken by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations alongside with other partners in order to secure a brighter future for women's rights in Afghanistan?



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