

Through Their Own Words: An Interview Analysis of Women's Legal Status in Taloqan, Afghanistan

Research Methodology

This report is based on a collection of firsthand testimonies from 10 Afghan women gathered in April 2025 from various ethnicities in Takhar, Afghanistan. The data was collected through two primary methods:

• Written Submissions

A survey consisting of 25 questions was sent via WhatsApp and other secure platforms. Participants were given time to reflect and respond to the questions in Dari. Upon request, after copying the responses, the messages were deleted, and the auto-delete timer was activated for their security.

• Audio and Written Interviews

Direct voice calls and voice messages were used to conduct interviews with women who found it easier to speak rather than write. Some other participants responded to the questions in writing. Follow-ups were conducted securely.

Participant Profile

- Women aged 19 to 48
- From various provinces and ethnic backgrounds
- Professional women, including former university students, staff, doctors, and teachers.
- High school girls now over 18 who have been deprived of education
- Widows and women whose husbands remarried and who are under economic pressure
- Disabled students
- Civil society activists

These voices reflect the diverse experiences of Afghan women today, providing an unfiltered and sincere portrayal of their daily lives.

Key Themes and Findings (Part One)

Women's Access to Legal Resources and Support Regarding Violence: Barriers to Accessing the Legal System

Women in Afghanistan face significant challenges in accessing the formal judicial and legal system, often stemming from legal and social constraints rooted in patriarchal norms. One major barrier is the requirement for a male guardian or representative to accompany women when filing a legal complaint. This not only restricts women's independence but also exposes them to potential threats or pressures from their families or communities.

In many cases, the judicial system fails to provide the necessary protection or support to women seeking justice. Unfortunately, in provinces like Takhar, when women or girls face domestic, social, or state violence, there is no accessible legal authority available to file complaints or seek help. "After the takeover of the Islamic Emirate and the Taliban's rule, all previous laws were nullified, and government institutions were dismantled. Now, no entity or law exists to protect victimized women, and acts of violence against women within families are no longer criminalized. In cases where women approach institutions, their cases are referred to local councils and mosque clerics, where decisions overwhelmingly favour male perpetrators. As a result, women either continue to endure abuse at home, resort to suicide, or are forced into marriages. Currently, no one dares to approach the authorities anymore." However, if women manage to reach urban lawyers and pay large sums of money, only divorce cases are sometimes processed, and even then, only women with financial independence can pursue them. Those without economic means are forced to live with their suffering for years.

This situation reveals a systemic failure by judicial and law enforcement authorities to respond to gender-based violence.

(a) Lack of Support Resources and Structures for Women

Unfortunately, under the current rule of the Islamic Emirate, there is no real justice in the judicial processes for women. Women who are arrested or imprisoned are often sent to prison without due process or basic rights. Although access to a defence lawyer is a fundamental right under judicial principles, the government makes no effort to provide legal representation.

Only women with sufficient economic resources can personally hire lawyers at exorbitant costs that are unaffordable for most families. In contrast, the majority of incarcerated women lack both financial resources and family or institutional support. These women are silent victims of the system, spending years behind bars without their cases being reviewed.

In urban courts, if a female prisoner's case remains without a lawyer or follow-up, it can take five to six years without any attention. This demonstrates that the judicial system is not only unjust but also actively marginalizes women and deprives them of their basic human rights.

For example, a woman who continued to live in her home after separating from her husband was subjected to blatant injustice. Her ex-husband visited to see their children, but a neighbour reported this to the local community and mosque cleric. Without hearing the woman's side, they

ruled on her "social execution" and forced expulsion. Tearfully, she had to leave the home filled with years of memories and move to a distant area.

Other examples of abuse within families occur, but such violence is rarely criminalized. When women seek help from formal institutions, cases are usually referred to local councils or mosque clerics, where decisions again favour male perpetrators. Consequently, women either endure violence at home, commit suicide, or are forced into coerced marriages. Today, many women no longer dare to approach judicial institutions.

Additionally, in Bangi District of Takhar Province, two months ago, an 11-year-old girl was first raped and then brutally beheaded. To date, no transparent information has been made available regarding the investigation or identification of the perpetrators. This tragic event reflects the structure of a despotic government where brute force prevails over justice and the rights of the people are systematically ignored.

Anonymous Source:

29 years old, a Bachelor's degree holder and women's rights activist from Farkhar District, Takhar, Afghanistan.

Limited Access to Legal Representation

One of the primary obstacles to women's access to justice is their general lack of awareness of their legal rights, a problem that is exacerbated by financial constraints and the inability to afford legal representation. According to the interviewees, there is no clear and effective law in place within the current structure of the Taliban regime to protect women from violence. Not only are protective laws not developed, but there is also a lack of will to safeguard women's basic rights.

Furthermore, the absence of awareness programs about legal rights and pathways to justice has made it even more difficult for women. In many regions, there are no official or community-based organizations that educate women about their rights, and access to legal information has been severely restricted. This lack of awareness leaves women ignorant of their rights, preventing them from defending themselves against injustice and oppression.

In the prevailing environment, an unwritten motto is dominant: "Endure and persevere." Any injustice, suffering, and oppression faced by women is considered an inevitable fate. When women protest against abuse, instead of being heard, they are blamed and told, "You must not be a good woman." As a result, the responsibility for these issues, without addressing their structural causes, is once again placed on women.

This situation contrasts with the fact that Islam grants women extensive and valuable rights. However, the ruling group has ignored these rights and adopted an oppressive stance.

Women who are illiterate or lack formal education are forced to endure oppression due to their ignorance of their rights and the lack of opportunities for effective defense. Even educated and aware women are not exempt from this situation; their protests for their rights are met with

107 threats, suppression, and accusations. Sometimes, because of their awareness, they are subjected
108 to persecution.

109 According to reports from the interviewees, the research indicates that women, due to economic
110 problems, cultural restrictions, and social pressures, are unable to afford legal representation, and
111 there are no opportunities for them. Even if they do approach the courts, their voices are not
112 heard. In some cases, women are blamed, condemned, and ultimately subjected to severe
113 violence, including murder, for daring to complain about their husbands or families. This
114 situation, combined with a lack of sufficient awareness and legal clarity, has forced many women
115 to silently endure violence, abuse, and forced marriages, perpetuating cycles of violence and
116 injustice within society.

117 **Notable Case Studies**

118 **Case Study 1: Forced to Live in Fear**

119 A Civil Rights Activist's Narrative: An Experience of Suppression and Humiliation:

120 I am a woman who has worked for many years as a civil rights activist in Afghanistan,
121 particularly in Takhar province. During the republic era, I worked with passion and motivation,
122 even dedicating my days off to volunteer activities. My activities were widely covered in local
123 magazines and newspapers. However, with the rise of the Taliban, all my hopes and
124 achievements were shattered in an instant.

125 One of the bitterest moments of my life occurred when I encountered the Ministry for Promotion
126 of Virtue and Prevention of Vice forces in the city. That day, I was exhausted and had high blood
127 pressure. Just because I briefly removed my headscarf to drink some water, I was surrounded by
128 several individuals who insulted me with offensive and degrading words.

129 When I tried to defend myself and claim my right, I was immediately accused of "inciting
130 women against the Emirate" and "activism during the Republic period." There were four of
131 them; two of them were holding whips and contacted someone to transfer me by vehicle.

132 At that critical moment, God's grace and the intervention of a respected local intellectual saved
133 my life. He courageously intervened and, after much effort, managed to rescue me from the
134 hands of the Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice forces, even though one of
135 the officers was attempting to force me into the vehicle.

136 This painful incident led me to an undeniable truth: under the Taliban regime, women who try to
137 defend their rights are not only ignored but also face false accusations and severe repression.

138 Humiliation, devaluation, and the suppression of women are part of the ruling system's policies.
139 In such conditions, being a woman and standing against injustice requires courage, and the price
140 for that courage is often very high

Case Study 2: Forced Marriage Issues

A 13-year-old girl in Takhar province was forcibly married to a 38-year-old man who was a member of the Islamic Emirate. When Taliban soldiers asked for the girl's hand in marriage, the family was forced to marry her off to the man without any reason. Neither the girl's consent nor her family's was considered. Furthermore, mosque imams announce from the pulpit that widowed and headless women must be married to Taliban soldiers by force. Some individuals have even been hired to inform the Taliban of the addresses of widows so they can be married to one of the Taliban soldiers. Currently, other painful and intolerable cases are emerging, where senior Taliban forces threaten and accuse handsome teenage boys of crimes they have not committed. Due to continuous threats, the boys and their families are coerced into allowing these boys to be sexually exploited. This demonstrates how traditional norms override legal protections.

C) Systematic Violence and Lack of Justice

In Afghanistan, there is no justice for women or teenage boys. Especially in the northern regions, there are cases of ethnic discrimination where young Tajiks are forcibly disappeared for a week. Then their lifeless bodies are brought back to their homes. Forced displacement and the confiscation of agricultural lands, houses, and property from their grandfathers continue, but these lands are given to those loyal to the Taliban. Such situations are widespread and continue to occur on a large scale.

Anonymous respondent, 42 years old, with a medical education from Takhar province.

Another case is recently happened that; A female professor at a university in Afghanistan intended to conduct a research study on the current economic situation of women in the country. However, she began receiving numerous threatening phone calls warning her to discontinue her work. The Taliban informed her that her research topic was contrary to their government's principles and policies, cautioning that if she proceeded and published her paper, she would be imprisoned. Shortly afterward, the Taliban kidnapped her husband, who has since gone missing, and she remains unaware of his whereabouts or safety.

She is now unemployed, without any form of support, and raising four children under challenging circumstances. When she approached the justice office to share her concerns and seek help in finding any information about her husband, the head of the office proposed marriage to her instead of offering assistance. She was left shocked and deeply disheartened, realizing that even the authorities she turned to for justice were unwilling to help her in this dire situation.

The current government has created a devastating environment for all citizens, particularly for women, who continue to face severe oppression, exploitation, and insecurity.

178 **D) Access to Education and Healthcare**

179 Today, in Takhar province, access to education and healthcare has become an unattainable dream
 180 for women and girls. Schools for girls above the sixth grade are closed, and educational
 181 opportunities are limited to short-term health courses or informal programs. On the other hand,
 182 healthcare services are severely impacted; hospitals suffer from a lack of equipment and
 183 specialist staff, and mental health services are nearly non-existent in many provinces.
 184 Women who do manage to access healthcare services often struggle with severe mental health
 185 issues, but support programs are few and inadequate. Weak internet and high costs also prevent
 186 women from benefiting from online courses. This widespread deprivation not only threatens
 187 women's physical and mental health but also plunges the future of a generation into darkness.
 188 Within Afghanistan, there is no specific governmental or private institution dedicated to the
 189 education of women and girls. Only a few NGOS are allowed to offer limited services in

190 the healthcare sector, particularly in the field of mental health. Currently, women who visit
 191 healthcare centers are suffering from severe mental health problems and urgently need
 192 specialized services.

193 In Takhar province, only one government institution works in mental health, and independent
 194 NGOs have not yet started operating in this area. Meanwhile, in Kabul, several NGOs supported
 195 by the UN have been conducting various educational programs, particularly in mental health.

196 A significant portion of these educational programs is offered online, but they face serious
 197 challenges. These include the inability of many people to afford internet credits and the high
 198 costs of

199 **E) Access to Education and Healthcare**

200 In Takhar province today, access to education and healthcare for women and girls has become an
 201 unattainable dream. Schools for girls above the sixth grade have been closed, and educational
 202 opportunities are limited to short-term health courses or informal programs. On the other hand,
 203 healthcare services have also been severely impacted; hospitals suffer from a lack of equipment
 204 and specialized staff, and mental health services are almost nonexistent in many provinces.

205 Women who manage to access healthcare services often struggle with serious mental health
 206 issues, but the support programs are few and inadequate. Weak internet and high costs have also
 207 prevented women from benefiting from online courses. This widespread deprivation not only
 208 threatens women's physical and mental health but also plunges the future of a generation into
 209 darkness.

210 Within Afghanistan, there is no specific governmental or private institution dedicated to the
 211 education of women and girls. Only a few NGOS are allowed to provide limited services in the
 212 healthcare sector, especially in the field of mental health. Currently, women who visit healthcare
 213 centers are suffering from severe mental health problems and urgently need specialized services.

214 In Takhar province, only one government institution works in mental health, and independent
215 NGOs have not yet started operating in this area. Meanwhile, in Kabul, several NGOs supported
216 by the UN are conducting various educational programs, particularly in mental health.

217 A significant portion of these educational programs is offered online, but these online programs
218 face serious challenges. These include the inability of many people to afford internet credits and
219 the high communication costs, which have made these programs inaccessible and ineffective for
220 many Afghan women. Additionally, the academic credibility of the certificates offered in these
221 online courses is also being questioned.

222 **F) Rural vs. Urban Differences in Women's Deprivation**

223 Today, the deprivation of women, whether in urban or rural areas, does not differ much; the pain
224 and suffering of women are shared everywhere. These deprivations include the lack of freedom,
225 lack of access to education, poor mental health, lack of job opportunities, economic difficulties,
226 restrictions on travel, and ultimately, the absence of legal support.

227 However, there are differences between rural and urban women. Rural women, due to their lack
228 of education and awareness, are unable to defend their rights when faced with violence and often
229 remain silent in the face of abuse. In contrast, urban women, of whom I am one, are more aware
230 than rural women. Although we too have been affected by social issues and psychological
231 pressures, and the negative impacts on our mental and emotional health and that of our children
232 have been heavy, due to our relative access to education and information, we can defend
233 ourselves to some extent in critical situations.

234 From my personal experience, when my son and I faced problems, we were able to solve some
235 of the challenges. Meanwhile, rural women are more vulnerable in such situations and cannot
236 typically resist or defend themselves.

237 Anonymous female respondent, 28 years old, Master's degree from the district of Warsaj, Takhar
238 province.

239 **G) Forced and Child Marriage**

240 During my time working as a doctor, many girls aged 14, 16, or 17 would come to my clinic for
241 treatment. When I asked about the reason for their marriages, they would respond with a sad
242 smile:

243 "What can we do? We are not allowed to study, we are not allowed to learn, and we don't have
244 any activities to occupy our time. The only option left for us is marriage and starting a family."
245 Moreover, when the men of our family would go to the mosque for the five daily prayers, they
246 reported that the Taliban were announcing in the mosques that girls under ten years old should be
247 married off to the Mujahideen. Additionally, Taliban leaders themselves have taken up polygamy
248 without any action or protest against it.

249 People, in fear of the brutal Taliban, have been forced into silence.

H) Psychological Effects and Mental Health Challenges

Child marriage has profound psychological effects on girls. Girls who are forced into marriage at a young age or during adolescence, due to their lack of mental readiness to accept marital responsibilities, experience severe psychological pressure. These pressures often lead to mental disorders such as chronic anxiety, severe depression, lack of self-trust, distrust of others, and a deep sense of helplessness. The feeling of captivity and inability to make decisions causes these girls to live with fear, sadness, and a sense of worthlessness.

The mental health challenges following child marriage are extensive. Young girls, often due to domestic violence, lack of social support, and lack of access to psychological services, are in a fragile state. Trauma caused by sexual pressures, forced labour, and the absence of emotional support can lead to issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal thoughts, and social isolation. In the absence of counselling and psychotherapy services, these harms are not only left untreated but deepen over time, affecting future generations as well.

I) Economic and Legal Vulnerabilities

Afghan girls and women face serious economic and legal harms due to the lack of financial independence. The inability to pursue education, restrictions on employment, and harsh laws that strip women of property rights and decision-making authority have prevented them from having their sources of income. Complete economic dependence on their family or husband places women in a highly vulnerable position, where they have less ability to defend themselves against violence, discrimination, and even exploitation.

Legally, the absence of effective judicial support has deprived women of access to justice. Many women, even when facing violence or violations of their rights, are forced to remain silent and accept oppression because they lack the financial means to hire a lawyer or pursue legal action. This situation not only tramples on women's human dignity but also traps them in a cycle of poverty, injustice, and despair. As a result, economic and legal harms directly affect their mental and social well-being, putting future generations at serious risk.

Culture of Silence: Continuation of Violence within the Family Framework

After the rise of the Taliban, many Afghan families have witnessed the reproduction of the same culture of violence, dominance, and repression within their own homes. Today, in every Afghan family, it seems there is a "domestic Taliban" present; a man who reflects the Taliban's values and views toward women and children in his daily behaviour. These men, without the need for weapons or military uniforms, apply the same methods of repression, humiliation, and exertion of power in the family environment.

Domestic violence against women and children, which existed in Afghan society even before, is now being carried out more extensively and with greater legitimacy. In this situation, family men not only restrict women's freedoms but also apply psychological pressure, threats, beatings, and prevent education and work, implementing the Taliban's policies at the family level. This situation shows that domestic violence today is no less severe than the direct violence of the Taliban; it is part of the same oppressive system that has now penetrated homes as well.

Domestic violence, which was previously prevalent in rural communities, has now expanded into

urban families. In this process, women are deprived of their right to education, work, and personal freedoms and are subjected to psychological and physical pressure. This culture, once considered a "rural problem," has now become a nationwide issue; a violence that is no less than the direct oppression of the Taliban, but flows covertly within the hearts of homes, causing the suffering and emotional destruction of women and children.

Key Issues and Findings (Part Two)

1. The Silencing of Civil Society and the Confinement of Women to Underground Activities

After the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, civil society, which once played an active and dynamic role in supporting human rights, freedom of expression, and women's rights, was severely suppressed and silenced. Many organizations were shut down, and civil activists either had to flee or resort to clandestine activities to protect their lives. Particularly women, who were the backbone of civil society, are now forced to work in underground spaces and in secrecy. In all provinces of Afghanistan, from large cities to remote villages, women have been forced to avoid public presence and continue their educational, cultural, and support activities in a secretive manner, with fear and anxiety. This major regression has not only limited women's social and educational opportunities but has also hindered the movement of society towards development and progress. Today, Afghan women are a symbol of silent resistance, still striving to keep hope and their ideals alive in the most challenging conditions. However, those who still engage in civil society activities are being accused by the Taliban and conservative sections of society with negative labels such as immorality, to tarnish their reputation and push them out of the struggle.

2. Barriers for Widows, Divorced Women, and Single Mothers

In Afghanistan, widows, divorced women, and single mothers face social discrimination, economic poverty, and legal injustice. The negative societal attitude marginalizes these women, making them targets of blame and rejection. The lack of legal support and the difficult access to justice leave them defenceless against violence and exploitation. In such circumstances, these women have become victims of a cycle of poverty, humiliation, and neglect, which not only strips away their human dignity but also severely threatens their future.

- **Custody rights:** The right to custody of children is often not granted to mothers.
- **Life decisions:** Their life decisions are made by neighbours and tribal councils.
- **Inheritance rights:** Their inheritance rights are completely ignored.
- **Stigmatization:** They are labelled as "unlucky" or "a threat" and are targeted for exploitation.
- **Accusations and suspicion:** They are subjected to accusations and suspicion.

A woman has said: "Four years have passed since I received my divorce papers, but under pressure from the Taliban, I am being forced to continue living with my husband. This woman

was sold to this elderly man by his first wife, and a forced marriage occurred. Currently, she is hiding in one of the safe houses."

3. Ways of Resistance for Women in Afghanistan

Despite the severe restrictions imposed by the Taliban and the comprehensive repression, Afghan women have found creative and courageous ways to resist and continue their struggle. One of the most important methods has been continuing education through online classes and establishing underground schools.

In many provinces, girls and young women secretly participate in online educational courses using mobile phones, laptops, and limited internet access. In difficult conditions, with precise coordination and careful security measures, they continue their education to keep the hope for a better future alive.

Furthermore, small groups of brave teachers have created underground schools in homes, basements, and informal places. These underground schools have not only provided an opportunity for girls to study but have also become centers for cultural and social resistance for women against the Taliban's anti-women policies.

These efforts are carried out with full coordination, maximum precautionary measures, and trust-building among families and teachers. In fact, this silent and unassuming struggle is a symbol of hope, perseverance, and Afghan women's belief in the right to education and a brighter future.

Women with Disabilities: Double Suffering in Silence

The testimonies of mothers and women with disabilities reveal widespread neglect and structural discrimination.

Women with disabilities in Afghanistan face a lack of legal educational programs, inadequate healthcare services, and a lack of special support. An example of this situation is a 20-year-old girl who, despite being paralyzed in both legs, had learned the profession of hairdressing. However, the Taliban threatened her, confiscated her tools, and registered her home under the pretext of the beauty treatments of several girls. Despite the threats, she continued her work secretly due to her passion and need. The violence of the Taliban against the female population, even women with disabilities, is unyielding.

5. Suggestions from the Women Themselves

Participants provided the following practical suggestions:

- "I ask human rights organizations and UNAMA to organize support for Afghan women in a hidden manner and create opportunities for information dissemination through aid organizations, global media, and online programs so that the voice of women's demand for justice does not go silent. Women need to raise their awareness, save their families from poverty and psychological pressure, and have access to their individual and social rights. These measures could prevent domestic violence and underage and forced marriages. Afghan women are burning in the fire of injustice; they have raised their voices many times but have not been heard. Reviewing this questionnaire brought tears to my eyes because the truth of Afghan women's suffering goes beyond words. We, Afghan women, are in a state of gradual death and demand serious attention for access to formal justice."
- "Women fighting for justice in Afghanistan experience the worst situation in terms of economic, psychological, political, and all freedoms. They must be aware of the safety of their lives, as any small activity can lead to attacks against them. I request that advocacy organizations, as much as possible, address the economic situation of women, which is at its worst."
- "To have the voices of Afghan women heard and for them to access their human rights, financial support and sustained backing from organizations are necessary. Without this support, justice remains only a slogan. Despite global emphases, women, especially in deprived areas, face indifference. Many victims of domestic violence lack education and financial resources and have no shelter or support after leaving their homes. Economic empowerment for women is the first step for them to break the cycle of violence and attain individual and social justice."
- Reopening schools and universities for girls without delay.
- Launching legal awareness programs tailored to Afghan culture.
- Reviving mental health programs in Takhar province and rural areas.
- Strengthening local networks of female counsellors.
- Ensuring non-discrimination in humanitarian aid.
- Expanding UNAMA educational programs in Takhar province, which are currently in Kabul.

If Afghan women learn their rights, they will begin to defend themselves. First, they must be taught that they have the right to do so.

Recommendations (Section Three)

1. Creating Social and Legal Support Networks:

Establish independent legal and social networks that help women access legal counselling, social support, and safe shelters when needed. These networks can be managed by international and local organizations, especially in remote and disadvantaged areas, offering services to women in distress.

2. Economic and Employment Empowerment for Women:

Launch economic empowerment programs for women, including vocational training, support for entrepreneurship, and job creation opportunities. Also, establish small financial institutions where women can receive low-interest loans to start their small businesses.

3. Strengthening the Role of Media in Changing Attitudes:

Use local and global media to raise awareness about women's rights, the importance of girls' education, and the harms of forced marriages and domestic violence. Television and radio programs should focus on promoting gender equality and human rights for women, and encourage cultural changes.

4. Education and Awareness for Local Leaders:

Launch educational programs for local leaders, religious scholars, and tribal elders about women's rights and the importance of gender equality. These leaders can act as facilitators of change within the community and allow women to defend their rights.

5. Access to Mental Health Services:

Establish specialized programs for women's access to mental health services, especially in remote areas. These services could include individual and group counselling for women suffering from domestic violence and psychological stress due to wartime conditions.

6. Support for Girls and Women in Crisis Situations:

Establish safe shelters and support programs for girls and women in crisis, such as victims of domestic violence and forced marriages. These shelters should be specifically built in urban and rural areas and offer essential services like education, psychological counselling, and legal support.

Conclusion:

The situation for women in Afghanistan, especially after recent developments, is critically concerning. Forced and underage marriages have become common, and many girls are coerced into marriage without consent or proper awareness. Alongside this issue, the lack of access to a fair judicial system has prevented women from asserting their rights against violence, discrimination, and sexual assault. Widows face compounded difficulties; they not only struggle with economic poverty but are also deprived of social and psychological support and face various societal pressures and stigmas. On the other hand, women who have sought divorce or separation often face severe discrimination and a lack of supportive resources, making them frequent victims of violence and injustice. All these challenges have combined to trap many Afghan women, particularly in deprived regions, in a cycle of violence, poverty, and lack of rights. To improve this situation, the international community and human rights organizations must take urgent, practical, and sustainable measures to provide financial, legal, psychological, and social support for Afghan women, paving the way for their access to justice and dignified lives.

Appendix – Research Methodology and Collaborators

This report is based on primary qualitative data collected through a comprehensive approach, including written questionnaires and audio interviews. These methods were specifically chosen to ensure the safety and security of the participants and to preserve the authenticity of the voices of Afghan women in the current socio-political conditions.

Distribution of Questionnaires and Data Collection:

- A total of 25 questions were sent to 10 women from Takhar, Taloqan in Afghanistan.
- Participants were selected from diverse backgrounds, including:
 - Women from rural areas face isolation and social discrimination.
 - Former and current students who have been deprived of their right to education due to the Taliban regime.
 - Women who have worked in international aid organizations, the health sector, education, and other fields.
 - Widows, women victims of forced marriages, and women victims of gender-based violence.
- Participants were given ample time to think, reflect, and respond in writing through social networks, especially WhatsApp, to ensure their comfort and privacy.
- After sending their responses, women were advised to delete their messages and activate the security timer to automatically delete the messages to ensure their safety.

2. Audio Interviews:

- In addition to the written questionnaires, 10 audio messages were collected through direct phone interviews, where women spoke in detail about their experiences.
- These interviews were conducted in April 2025 via phone calls to maintain participant safety.

- The responses highlighted issues related to violence, discrimination, and survival strategies in an environment that is extremely dangerous for Afghan women.

3. Diversity of Participants:

This research includes women from Takhar, Afghanistan:

- Widows, single mothers, and women who have been victims of gender-based violence.
- Former university students and skilled professionals, such as doctors, nurses, teachers, and seamstresses.
- Women who have been deprived of access to schools or educational centers due to the restrictions of the current regime.
- Women from rural areas face severe isolation, discrimination, and deprivation of basic rights.

4. Ethical Considerations:

All interviews and responses were conducted by safety and human dignity principles. All respondents were assured of anonymity, and they had complete freedom to participate. To protect the identity of the women, no names, geographic locations, or identifying details were included in the report. They were also advised to delete all their information and contacts and activate the auto-delete timer for their messages to ensure their safety.

Collaborators

This report is dedicated to the resilient women of Afghanistan, whose unwavering strength in the face of injustice has fueled global efforts to advance women's rights. We especially acknowledge:

- The women's rights defenders, journalists, healthcare professionals, and humanitarian workers who, despite constant threats, remain steadfast in their pursuit of justice and equality.
- The educators and mental health experts who risk their safety to continue offering knowledge and support to their communities.
- The international organizations that persist in their mission to empower Afghan women through education, healthcare, and advocacy despite the many challenges.

While this report concludes here, the dialogue must go on. Let us remain engaged, listening, supporting, and taking action to uphold the rights of Afghan women.