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First UA: 112/23 Index: ASA 11/7509/2023 Afghanistan of December 7, 2023

AFGHANISTAN STOP PUNISHING WOMEN PROTESTERS

Since the Taliban returned to power in August 2021, women protesting Taliban's draconian policies have been forcibly disappeared, arbitrarily arrested, and detained and subjected to torture and other-ill treatment. Amongst those being targeted for protesting, the Taliban arbitrarily arrested and detained four prominent women human rights defenders Parisa Azada, Neda Parwani, Zholia Parsi, and Manizha Seddiqi, between September and November 2023.

These four women human rights defenders have not had access to lawyers or regular family visits while in detention and are at risk of torture and other forms of ill-treatment. They have not been charged with any offences. Neda and Zholia's family members were also arrested. These women human rights defenders and their family members must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Write to the Director of Intelligence urging him to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Parisa Azada, Manizha Seddiqi, Zholia Parsi, and Neda Parwani, and any of their family members also held in detention.
- Pending their release, ensure their detention conditions meet international standards, and that they are provided with access to lawyers and are able to receive family visits.
- Immediately stop subjecting women and their families to arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearance, and other grave human rights violations, simply for exercising their rights.

Write to:

Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq
Director of Intelligence
General Directorate of Intelligence
Chaharahi Zanbaq
Kabul, Afghanistan
Salutation: Dear Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq

And copy:

His Excellency M. Hassan SOROOSH Y.
Ambassador
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
240 Argyle Avenue
Ottawa, ON K2P 1B9
Tel: (613) 563-4223; 563-4265 Fax: (613) 563-4962
Email: contact@afghanembassy.ca

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Neda Parwani, Parisa Azada, Manizha Seddiqi, and Zholia Parsi were arbitrarily arrested from their homes on September 9, September 27 and October 9 respectively. It is reported that Zholia Parsi, Neda Parwani, and Parisa Azada are being held in the Taliban District 40 detention. However, Manizha Seddiqi was sent to Pol Charkhi prison on December 5, 2023. On December 4, it was reported that Zholia Parsi was taken to hospital and back to prison due to a deteriorating health condition which could be the result of torture and ill-treatment.

Since taking control of Kabul in August 2021, [the Taliban de facto authorities have increasingly violated the rights of women and girls](#), prohibiting their political participation and involvement in public life. The policies adopted by the Taliban de facto authorities have curtailed the rights to freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, as well as the rights to equality and non-discrimination. Despite this, women have led peaceful protests against the Taliban in various Afghan cities, including Kabul, Faizabad, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif.

Women organizing or participating in those protests have been subjected to unlawful use of force, arbitrary arrests, and detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, and other forms of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment. In August 2023, at least eight members of the Women's National Unity and Solidarity Movement were arrested and detained for several hours because they were organizing protests. During protests, women protesters are subjected to verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation, and threats by armed Taliban agents, who greatly outnumber the protesters and routinely destroy or confiscate banners, leaflets, and other information materials of the protesters. Additionally, some journalists reporting on these protests have been subject to arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment.

The Taliban de facto authorities have also followed women post-protests to arrest them. Many women have been arrested at gunpoint in their homes or in safe houses, often violently. Some of the women's male relatives have also been severely beaten by Taliban actors at the time of the arrests. Women arrested have been detained incommunicado and repeatedly subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment.

*Please send your appeals until **February 1, 2024**. If there's the need for further action after that date, the UA will be duly updated.*

<https://amnesty.ca/urgent-actions/afghanistan-stop-punishing-women-protesters/>