UN Human Rights Council, 56th session (18 June — 12 July 2024)

Item 2: Enhanced interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan

Statement on Afghanistan

Speaker: Negina Yari

The Special Rapporteur’s latest report¹ confirms that the large-scale, systematic gender-based violations in Afghanistan constitute gender apartheid. With such a level of discrimination, segregation, and denial of fundamental human rights in the country, normalising relations with the Taliban cannot and must not be an option.

To give political recognition to the Taliban is to say that the world is willing to ignore the suffering of millions for the sake of political convenience. The international community must not let this happen.

As we approach the upcoming diplomatic talks in Doha, I urge all delegations in this room not to normalise oppression. You must stand in full support with the women and girls of Afghanistan. But mere words of solidarity are not enough.

The rights of women and girls must be front and centre of any talks on the future of the country. Any engagement with the Taliban must be fully informed by international law and the recommendations of Afghan women inside and outside the country. Ensuring the participation of civil society representatives in the upcoming Doha talks is a must. The full, equal, effective and safe participation of diverse women civil society and human rights defenders is essential to the legitimacy of the talks.

Upholding women’s and girls’ rights is a prerequisite to addressing the humanitarian crisis. Humanitarian aid must reach all Afghans in need, especially ethnic and religious minorities and other marginalized groups without discrimination. Pressure needs to be maintained on the Taliban to allow women to work so there is a principled humanitarian response. Providing predictable, flexible, quality funding directly to the remaining women-led organizations operating in Afghanistan is also essential. Humanitarian action that fails to uphold our rights causes harm and entrenches the Taliban’s repressive policies.

The international community has a moral and legal duty to stand firm against gender apartheid, and to hold the Taliban accountable for their gender-based crimes.