

GENDER DISCRIMINATION & VIOLATION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS



A FACTSHEET BY KIDSRIGHTS



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ABOUT



KIDSRIGHTS

KidsRights is an international non-governmental organization that promotes the wellbeing of children across the world and advocates for the realisation of their rights. KidsRights sees children as 'changemakers' who have the power to move the world and facilitates them in voicing their opinions and in taking action to bring about change.

KidsRights supports children by commanding global attention for the realisation of children's rights and by acting as a catalyst to ignite change, together with children and youths. This advocacy is supported with research and action. The KidsRights Foundation also finances local projects aimed at directly improving the rights of vulnerable children and stimulating child participation and changemaking by youths.

www.kidsrights.org

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE FACE OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GIRLS

Gender inequality is caused by both historical and contemporary practices that discriminate against people based on their gender. In fact, so far, no country in the world has achieved gender equality.¹ Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ('UNCRC') prohibits discrimination against children on any basis, which includes prohibition on discrimination based on sex and/or gender.² The focus of this report is on gender discrimination faced by girls and the resulting violation of children's rights enshrined in the UNCRC.

Due to violation of Article 2 of UNCRC - right against discrimination, following are some of the other rights that girls are deprived of:

Right to life, survival and development, Article 6 & Right to highest attainable standard of health, Article 24, UNCRC

- 70% of all new HIV infections among adolescents aged 15-19 occurred among girls.³
- 19 % of all girls are victims of child marriage.⁴

Right to be heard, Article 12; Right to freedom of expression, Article 13; Right to access information, Article 17, UNCRC (Right to participate)

- Only 6% of all women have internet access, compared to 25% among men.⁵
- 90% of adolescent girls and young women (15-24) in low-income countries don't have access to internet, compared to 78% of adolescent boys and young men.⁶
- In 2024, women held only 27 per cent of seats in national parliaments and 35.5 per cent of seats in local governments.⁷

Right to protection against all forms of violence, Article 19, UNCRC

- Annually, more than 3 million young girls are threatened by Female Genital Mutilation.⁸
- 1 in every 20 adolescent girls (15-19) have experienced forced sex, one of the most violent forms of sexual abuse women and girls can suffer, in their lifetime.⁹

Right to education, Article 28, UNCRC

- 22% of adolescent girls (15-19) worldwide are not in education, employment or training compared to 13% of boys of the same age.¹⁰
- Sub-Saharan Africa has not achieved gender parity in enrolment at any stage of education.¹¹
- 9 of the 10 countries with the highest education exclusion rates for girls are in sub-Saharan Africa.¹² In ascending exclusion rates, these countries are Djibouti, Guinea, Mali, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Niger, Eritrea, South Sudan and Afghanistan.
- Only 36% of countries have set a national target on SDG 4 on gender parity in secondary education - the lowest rate of all benchmark SDG indicators.¹³

[1] Global Gender Gap Report 2024, World Economic Forum.

[2] Article 2, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.

[3] <https://data.unicef.org/topic/gender/overview/>

[4] Child Marriage, UNICEF, 2024, https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/XLS_Child-marriage-database_May-2024.xlsx

[5] Afghanistan Gender Country Profile 2024 Executive Summary, UN Women, page 5.

[6] Bridging the Gender Digital Divide, UNICEF2023, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/ictgenderdivide/>

[7] UN Women, Why so few women are in political leadership, and five actions to boost women's political participation, 2024,

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2024/09/five-actions-to-boost-womens-political-participation>

[8] Female Genital Mutilation, World Health Organisation, 2024, <https://www.who.int/fr/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

[9] <https://data.unicef.org/topic/gender/overview/>

[10] <https://data.unicef.org/topic/gender/overview/>

[11] GEM Report 2024, page 7.

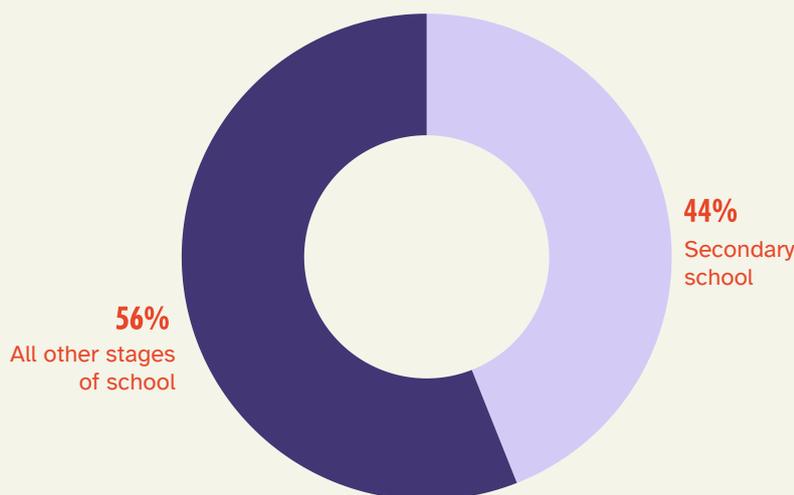
[12] GEM Report 2024, page 7.

[13] Global Education Monitoring Report 2024.

Afghanistan: Suppression of voices and violation of children’s rights

The ban on schooling beyond primary education for girls by the De Facto Authorities - Taliban (‘DFA’) in Afghanistan has led to the exclusion of 80% of Afghan girls and young women from schools, which is a staggering 2.5 million.¹⁴

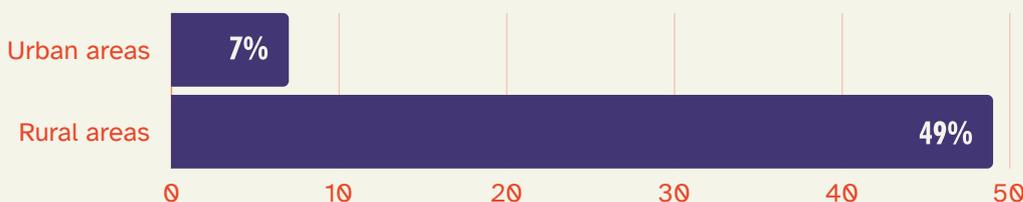
OUT OF SCHOOL GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN:
2.5 MILLION



Percentage composition of out of school-aged girls and young women based on their stage of schooling

Despite the DFA ban on post-primary education, 30% of the girls in the age of primary schooling are out of school due to numerous other barriers,¹⁵ including traditional, cultural and socio-economic barriers.

Non-availability of schools for school-aged girls in Afghanistan¹⁶



Disparity in access to schools between Afghan girls living in rural and urban areas

Lack of access to education leads to a higher number of child marriages for girls, which in turn leads to a higher risk of maternal mortality.

Afghanistan is estimated to see an increase in maternal mortality rate by 50%.¹⁷

[14] Afghanistan Gender Country Profile 2024 Executive Summary, UN Women, page 5.

[15] Let girls and women in Afghanistan learn, UNESCO, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/let-girls-and-women-afghanistan-learn>.

[16] See Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023, OCHA; UNESCO stands with all Afghans, UNESCO, 2023.

[17] Afghanistan Gender Country Profile 2024 Executive Summary, UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/Gender-country-profile-Afghanistan-Executive-summary-en.pdf>.

Participation rights of girls and women

The De Facto Authorities (DFA) in Afghanistan have imposed a string of restrictions, effectively violating the rights of girls and women to participate in social, economical and communal life.

Restriction on movement: The DFA ban on women visiting public places, including gyms, funfairs, public parks, and all-female bathhouses,¹⁸ severely restricts girl's access to public spaces, limiting their right to participate in the society.

Restriction on voices: The recent 'vice and virtue law'¹⁹ of the DFA imposes restrictions on women's voices (in any form) from being heard in public, which effectively violates all participation rights of girls and women.

Restriction on hearing/interacting: The DFA has now imposed a prohibition on women from hearing other women, as they have been asked to refrain from praying and singing in the presence of other women.²⁰

ACTION AGAINST TALIBAN'S DISCRIMINATORY RULE!

The Netherlands, Germany, Canada and Australia have issued a joint statement at the UN General Assembly in September 2024 against the Taliban ('DFA'), demanding a rollback of all the discriminatory restrictions on the female population in Afghanistan.²¹

Considering the lack of any response from the DFA, and the continuing escalation in discriminatory restrictions against girls and women in Afghanistan, these 4 countries are set to take the DFA to the International Court of Justice as early as in April 2025 to make them accountable for the violating girl's and women's rights.



[18], Women's rights in Afghanistan: An ongoing battle, European Parliament Research Service, 2024, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/747084/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)747084_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/747084/EPRS_BRI(2023)747084_EN.pdf)

[19] The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law, Afghanistan Analysts Network, 31 August 2024, <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/political-landscape/the-propagation-of-virtue-and-prevention-of-vice-law-translated-into-english/>.

[20] Afghan women 'banned from hearing each other' in bizarre new Taliban rule, Independent, 30 October 2024, <https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/south-asia/afghanistan-taliban-women-hearing-speak-b2637984.html>.

[21] Netherlands wants Taliban prosecuted for violating women's rights in Afghanistan, NL Times, 26 September 2024, <https://nltimes.nl/2024/09/26/netherlands-wants-taliban-prosecuted-violating-womens-rights-afghanistan>.



CALL TO ACTION

KidsRights calls on all governments:

- To adhere to the right of children against discrimination, Article 2 of UNCRC
- To repeal all laws and rules that discriminate against girls and deprive them from enjoying their rights
- To specifically implement national laws and policies to prohibit all forms of discrimination against girls
- To undertake concrete measures to raise awareness about rights of girls, including their right to protection against all forms of violence, and right to life, survival and development
- To ensure equal and effective access to education and healthcare for girls
- To safeguard and actively facilitate the right of girls to effectively participate in the society

KidsRights calls on civil society organisations and the international community:

- To work towards achieving the targets of SDG 5 – Gender Equality
- To lobby and collaborate with governments to raise awareness about rights of girls at the grassroots level
- To support, strengthen and facilitate activities aimed at safeguarding the rights of girls locally, regionally, nationally and internationally



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