

HRC 51: Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the human rights situation of women and girls in Afghanistan

Thank you Mr President,

Two months ago, this Council concluded that “the oppression of women and girls in Afghanistan is grave, institutionalized, widespread and systematic”. Tragically, nothing has changed.

To the human rights defenders across Afghanistan and to the Afghan women here today, let me begin by saying thank you. Thank you for continuing to shine a spotlight on the appalling situation you face. I am humbled by your courage and tireless determination.

Afghanistan is the only country in the world where girls cannot attend secondary school. Women in Afghanistan are unable to move around freely. They are confined to their homes. In many cases they are unable to work. They are severely restricted from enjoying their human rights.

With girls kept out of school, and as parents struggle to feed their families, the risk of child early and forced marriage increases.

Without education for girls, there will be fewer doctors, teachers and entrepreneurs in Afghanistan.

The UK will continue strongly championing the voices of Afghan women and girls and continue to provide life-saving support and provide space for Afghan women’s voices.

Our message to the Taliban is clear. Listen to Afghan women. Allow girls to go to school. Allow women to work. Allow women humanitarian workers to deliver life-saving aid. To put it simply, uphold their human rights.

Mr President, this Council must unite and demonstrate, once again, that we stand with Afghan women and girls.

Thank you.