

HRC 51: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

Special Rapporteur,

Let me start by thanking you for your detailed and sobering update to this Council. It is a reminder to us all, on this first day of the fifty-first session of the Council, of how crucial your mandate is in providing a voice to millions of Afghans.

We share your grave concern about the, “staggering regression in women and girls’ enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights since the Taliban took power”. Indeed, in no other country have women and girls so rapidly disappeared from all spheres of public life, particularly secondary schools. We call on the Taliban to urgently reverse these policies and practices restricting the human rights of Afghan women and girls.

Special Rapporteur, we also welcome your efforts to shed light on the broader situation of human rights in Afghanistan. Religious and ethnic minorities continue to be targeted, including by terrorist groups. There are allegations of arbitrary detention, torture and extrajudicial killings at the hands of the Taliban. Media freedoms have been restricted and there are all too frequent reports of peaceful public dissent being violently repressed.

The UK remains committed to supporting the Afghan people. We urge the Taliban urgently to take steps to protect the rights of all Afghans. This includes ensuring inclusive dialogue, which truly reflects Afghan society.

Your role, Special Rapporteur, is vital to provide an independent voice for the Afghan people, including women and girls. We will do all we can to support you in your work and we encourage our fellow members of this Council to do the same.

Thank you.