

TALIBAN INSTALLS VIRTUE AUTHORITY FOR WOMEN

ACHRS STATEMENT | VALENTINA BLONDEL



The rights of girls and women remain threatened under Taliban rule. In just a few days, the Taliban government has replaced the ministry of women's affairs and has not allowed women to return to school. At first, the Taliban seemed to respect women's rights to study, but there is an inconsistency in their previous statements. ACHRS condemns the Taliban government and calls for women's rights to education to be respected.

Less than a month after the Taliban's Kabul takeover, the Taliban has created the Ministry of "Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice" to replace the Women's Affairs Ministry. Staff of the World Bank's \$ 100 million Women's Economic Empowerment and Rural Development Program, run by women's affairs ministries, were escorted off the grounds, said program member Sharif Akhtar.

Mabouba Suraj, who leads the Afghan women's network group, said that she was astounded by all the new government's rules against the rights of women and girls. "It is becoming really, really troublesome. ... Is this the stage where the girls are going to be forgotten?" Suraj said. "I know they don't believe in giving explanations, but explanations are very important."

On September 17, the Taliban-led Ministry of Education encouraged boys ages six to twelve to go back to school with male teachers, but hasn't mentioned anything about girls. Previously, the National Minister of Higher Education had said that girls would have the same right as boys to access to education. This is similar 1990, when the Taliban denied girls and women the right to education and excluded them from public life.

UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay said she was deeply concerned about the situation of women in Afghanistan under the control of the Taliban and the limitations preventing girls from going back to school. "Should this ban be maintained, it would constitute an important violation of the fundamental right to education for girls and women," Azoulay said in a statement in the opening of the U.N. General Assembly.

ACHRS condemns all oppression of girls and women and any action against the rights of access to education, as well as the repression of women's public freedoms in Afghanistan. ACHRS supports activists and defenders of human and women's rights in Afghanistan.