50th session of the UN Human Rights Council

Urgent debate on the human rights situation of Afghan women

1 July 2022

Oral Statement by the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

Mr President,

The International Bar Association’s Human Rights Institute is seriously alarmed at deterioration of the rule of law in Afghanistan since the Taliban’s army unlawfully took over the country in August 2021. We further condemn the forcible overthrow of the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association in November 2021.¹

As the High Commissioner noted in its oral report in March 2022, ‘the safety of Afghan judges, prosecutors and lawyers(…) particularly women legal professionals(…) is a matter of acute concern’.² This is also in line with what the Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan expressed after his country visit last May.³

Mr President, women jurists are at particular risk as the Taliban intensifies its restrictions on women’s and girls’ rights and attempts to erase⁴ women from public life. Many women jurists fled from Afghanistan and are awaiting resettlement options; many others are stranded and wait to flee the country for their safety. Many of those are in hiding.⁵ Women legal professionals from the Hazara community are further discriminated based on their ethnicity and religion.

We also urge all States to redouble efforts to protect Afghan legal professionals, particularly women, in providing resettlement options and ensure safe destination to those who remained in Afghanistan. We urge this council to establish an investigative and accountability mechanism.

Thank you.

This statement was delivered by
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4 Kate Clark and Sayeda Rahimi, We need to breathe too’: Women across Afghanistan navigate the Taleban’s hijab ruling, Afghanistan Analysis Network, 1 June 2022, www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/rights-freedom/we-need-to-breathe-too-women-across-afghanistan-navigate-the-talebans-hijab-ruling%ef%bf%bc.

5 Oral update on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Statement by Nada Al-Nashif, supra note 5.