



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

2 May 2023

Dear Signatories,

I wish to thank you for your letter dated 30 April 2023, voicing your concerns about developments in Afghanistan, particularly regarding the rights of women and girls.

I condemn, without reservation, the decisions of the Taliban to ban women from attending higher education and from working for non-governmental organizations, and, now, the United Nations. These decisions are a violation of the human rights of women and have grave humanitarian consequences. This message has been consistently conveyed to all interlocutors, including directly to the Taliban during the Deputy Secretary-General's recent visit to Afghanistan, at my request.

The United Nations is committed to supporting the engagement of the international community on the issue of Afghanistan. The Security Council resolution, passed unanimously with 92 co-sponsors, condemned the decision of the Taliban to ban Afghan women from working for the United Nations in Afghanistan, which, it affirmed, undermines human rights and humanitarian principles, and called upon the Taliban to swiftly reverse the policies and practices that restrict the enjoyment by women and girls of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. It further reaffirmed the indispensable role of women in Afghan society, including in humanitarian response and peacebuilding, and stressed the importance of their full, equal, meaningful and safe participation for the future and long-term development of Afghanistan.

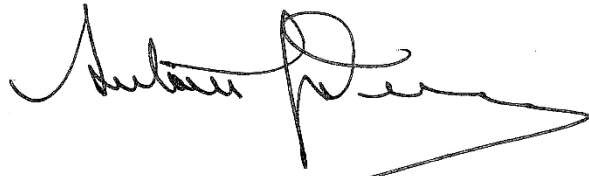
On 1 and 2 May 2023, I convened a group of special envoys on Afghanistan to enhance principled engagement around common objectives, including issues of human rights and inclusive governance, with a view to finding a durable way forward on the situation in Afghanistan.

Regarding the issue of recognition, that is a matter for Member States. The United Nations Secretariat follows any guidance that the General Assembly or the Security Council may provide on whom to interact with as the government of a Member State.

Women of Afghanistan of the Vienna Process
for a Democratic Afghanistan
Vienna

I take this opportunity to reaffirm that the United Nations stands in full solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and will continue to call for the reversal of all measures restricting the right of women and girls to education and the rights of women related to employment, freedom of movement and full, equal and meaningful participation in public life.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'António Guterres', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a long, thin horizontal line that extends to the right.

António Guterres