



STATEMENT AND UPDATE FROM THE UNITED NATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

KABUL, 11 April 2023 - The United Nations in Afghanistan reiterates its [unequivocal condemnation](#) of a decision by the Taliban *de facto* authorities to ban Afghan women from working for the UN in Afghanistan.

It is the latest in a series of discriminatory measures implemented by the Taliban *de facto* authorities with the goal of severely restricting women and girls' participation in most areas of public and daily life in Afghanistan.

The ban is unlawful under international law, including the UN Charter, and for that reason the United Nations cannot comply.

Through this ban, the Taliban *de facto* authorities seek to force the United Nations into having to make an appalling choice between staying and delivering in support of the Afghan people and standing by the norms and principles we are duty-bound to uphold.

It should be clear that any negative consequences of this crisis for the Afghan people will be the responsibility of the *de facto* authorities.

At this juncture, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, has initiated an operational review period up to 5 May 2023.

During this period, the UN in Afghanistan will conduct the necessary consultations, make required operational adjustments, and accelerate contingency planning for all possible outcomes.

The United Nations will maintain principled and constructive engagement with all possible levels of the Taliban *de facto* authorities, as [mandated](#) by the United Nations Security Council.

UN national personnel – women and men – have been instructed not to report to UN offices, with only limited and calibrated exceptions made for critical tasks.

The UN will endeavour to continue lifesaving, time-critical humanitarian activities in line with the humanitarian principles and criteria outlined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in January 2022, during which we will assess the scope, parameters and consequences of the ban, and pause activities where impeded.

The matter will be under constant review.

Since August 2021, the United Nations has strived to stay and deliver to ease the [unprecedented suffering](#) of the Afghan people.

UN work in Afghanistan is driven by the humanitarian imperative to save lives and guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

The ban, an extension of the already unacceptable restrictions placed in December 2022 on NGO partners at the frontline of aid delivery, deliberately discriminates against women and challenges the ability of the people of Afghanistan to continue accessing lifesaving and sustaining assistance and services.





It therefore breaches human rights and humanitarian principles.

United Nations engagement in Afghanistan, conducted extensively and in good faith, is anchored in the founding vision of the United Nations, that of peace, stability, and human rights for all peoples, and in accordance with the [United Nations Charter](#).

For more information, please contact spokesperson-unama@un.org

