



Charles Michel
President of the European Council
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 175
1048 Brussels
31 January 2023

Subject: Request to introduce special visas for Afghan women and girls in light of the human rights situation in Afghanistan under Taliban rule

Dear Mister President of the Council,

The murder of former Afghan MP Mursal Nabizada in Kabul on January 14th 2023¹ again underlines the abominable situation Afghan women are in since the Taliban took over.

The situation of women and girls in Afghanistan has been especially alarming since the Taliban regime took over the country in August 2021. The Taliban have now effectively created a society ruled by gender segregation, with strict mandatory social and clothing rules, where women's freedom of movement is drastically reduced. Women are now excluded from most work and public places, they lack serious access to healthcare and have been barred from universities. Moreover, all girls have been suspended from attending secondary schools.

Even worse, violence against women because of their gender has increased during Taliban rule, such as the tragic example of Mursal Nabizada. While at the same time, women's access to justice systems and legal assistance has drastically decreased, meaning that perpetrators are not held accountable for their acts, and in many cases women continue to live with their aggressor.

Following the European Union Agency for Asylum country report on Afghanistan², published on January 24th 2023, the situation for women and girls in the country equals that of persecution, which is why they should be eligible for refugee status in the EU³.

But not only that, we need to introduce special temporary visas for Afghan women and girls to allow them to come to the EU and find safety from persecution here.

This is especially relevant now that voices against migration and asylum are on the rise in Europe. When the Ukrainian people needed us, we were there. Now let us be there for Afghan women and girls too.

Yours sincerely,

Samira Rafaela, Renew Europe

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/15/former-afghan-mp-mursal-nabizada-shot-dead-in-kabul>

² <https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-afghanistan-2023>

³ <https://euaa.europa.eu/news-events/afghanistan-taliban-restrictions-women-and-girls-amount-persecution>

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Billy Kelleher, Renew Europe
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Isabel Santos, S&D

Cc: Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission