

## ***Afghan Women's Advocacy Committee in Canada***

President Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan  
Government of Afghanistan  
Presidential Palace  
Kabul  
Afghanistan

**CC:** Minister Noor Mohmamad Qarqin, Minister of Education, Afghanistan  
Dr. Sima Samar, Chairperson, Afghan Independent Human Rights  
Commission  
Honourable David Sproule, Ambassador of Canada to Afghanistan  
Canadian Brigadier-General David Fraser, Canadian Department of  
National Defence, 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group  
Honourable Pierre Pettigrew, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada

Friday January 6, 2006

Dear President Karzai,

As a coalition of Canadian organizations and individuals supporting the struggle for human rights of Afghan women and girls, we are deeply alarmed with the recent murders of teachers for instructing girl students in Southern Afghanistan.

On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006, Taliban militants stabbed and beheaded Malim Abdul Habib in front of his wife and eight children because Mr. Habib was the headmaster of the Shaikh Mathi Baba high school in Zabul province, which offers instruction for both boys and girls. In December 2005, Mohammed Harif, a male teacher in the province of Helmand, was shot to death by two armed men on motorcycles, reportedly at the hands of Taliban insurgents operating in the South of the country. The purported reason for his killing was because he had ignored threats to stop teaching girls. A few days later in this region, gunfire was opened on a group of young boy and girl students in front of their school, killing a grade twelve student and a school watchman. Reports indicated that Taliban insurgents have also killed other educational workers in several southern provinces.

Since 2002 several girls' schools have burned down in different parts of the country with impunity for the perpetrators and no security measures put in place to prevent future arson. Frequent "night letters" are left in public areas that threaten villagers with death or the death of their daughters for sending their girls to school.

These threatening incidents and deadly attacks are part of a wider pattern of violence against women and men, and boys and girls. The attacks target those who are fighting against great odds to receive an equal chance to access an education, in conservative and highly insecure parts of the country.

As you have repeatedly emphasized, an educational system available to girls and boys in all parts of the country is one of Afghanistan's greatest assets for the future. This violence threatens to suffocate the capacity of this precious future asset, and severely diminishes the courageous Afghans dedicated to making education accessible to girls and boys alike.

As part of the commitment of the Afghan government, the Canadian government, and the International community to stability and permanent peace in Afghanistan, it is critical that an environment conducive to the education of boys and girls be secured as a matter of urgent priority.

By way of this letter, the members of our Canadian coalition respectfully request the implementation of several key recommendations as important first steps towards preventing further violence and deterioration of the educational system in Afghanistan. These recommendations include:

- Providing guards for girls' schools in high risk areas;
- Providing secure school buses to transport girls from villages located far away from schools that girls can attend;
- Resources must be made available to identify the perpetrators of past attacks and bring them to justice.
- The Afghan government and its supporters should publicly condemn attacks on girls' schools and educators and defend the right of girls and young women to access educational opportunities equally. More than words though, decisive action must be taken by the national government as well as local authorities to prevent future attacks.

We urge you to implement these recommendations and look forward to a response at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully yours,

**Members of the Afghan Women's Advocacy Committee in Canada (AWAC-C):**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally Armstrong". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line above the name.

Sally Armstrong, Journalist

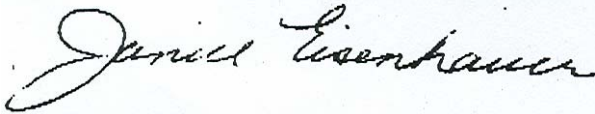


Ariane Brunet, Rights & Democracy (International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development)



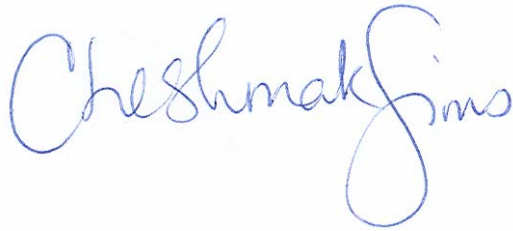
Droits et Démocratie  
Rights & Democracy

Centre international des droits de la personne et du développement démocratique  
International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development



Janice Eisenhauer, Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WAfghan)

Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan  
Femmes Canadiennes pour les Femmes en Afghanistan



Cheshmak Farhoumand-Sims, Centre for International and Security Studies - York University



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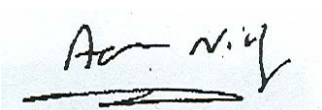


Homa Hoodfar, Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)

Women living under muslim laws

النساء في ظل قوانين المسلمين

Femmes sous lois musulmanes



Adeena Niazi, Afghan Women's Organization



Lauryn Oates, Rights & Democracy (International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development)



Droits et Démocratie  
Rights & Democracy

Centre international des droits de la personne et du développement démocratique  
International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development



Patmeena Sabit, Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WAfghan)

Canadian Women : Femmes Canadiennes  
for Women in : pour les Femmes en  
**Afghanistan**