

Member State Comments on Gender Apartheid

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| Statements on Codification of Gender Apartheid <i>as of July 2025</i> | | |
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| Afghanistan | <p>Written comment on the crimes against humanity draft treaty – December 2023</p> | <p>As the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations in Geneva and Former Vice President of the Human Rights Council, I am writing to express grave concern and propose an essential amendment to the Crimes Against Humanity Treaty Draft.</p> <p>Afghanistan, like many nations, has witnessed the harsh realities of what can only be described as "Gender Apartheid" - a systematic and brutal regime of discrimination and segregation based on gender since September 2021, the seizure of power by the Taliban. This phenomenon, unfortunately, is not unique to our nation but is a global crisis that undermines the fundamental principles of equality, dignity, and human rights that the United Nations and civilised communities stand for.</p> <p>"Gender Apartheid," as we propose it to be recognised, involves practices or/and incitement to them where one or more gender groups (most commonly women and girls) are systematically segregated, discriminated against, and denied fundamental human rights, including the right to education, work, freedom of movement, to the right to participate in social, political, and economic life, by another gender group.</p> <p>Recognising "Gender Apartheid" as a crime against humanity would be a historic step in the right direction for global human rights legislation. It would not only offer a framework for international accountability but also serve as a deterrent against the perpetration of such acts. This amendment would also align with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 5 and 16, which aim to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and peace justice, and strong institutions.</p> <p>The inclusion of "Gender Apartheid" in the draft treaty would also send a powerful message to the international community that gender-based discrimination in its most extreme forms will not be tolerated and that the global legal framework is adapting to address evolving forms of crimes against humanity.</p> <p>I urge the Commission to consider this proposal seriously and to take a stand for the millions of women and girls who are currently suffering under regimes of Gender Apartheid like the de facto Talian [sic] governance in Afghanistan. Our collective responsibility as member states of the United Nations is to ensure that our international legal instruments are robust, relevant, and reflective of the challenges faced by those most vulnerable among us.</p> |
| Australia | <p>Resumed session of the 6th Committee – April, 2024</p> | <p>Finally on draft article 2, Australia is considering ways in which the draft articles could address the conduct that has been described as gender apartheid as well as proposals to recognize reproductive violence as a crime against humanity.</p> |

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| | Written comment on the draft crimes against humanity treaty – December 2023 | We acknowledge that there may be further adjustments to the definition in the draft article that would assist with reflecting the development of international law since the Rome Statute was negotiated, and making any future convention fit for purpose and capable of garnering broad support. In this context, Australia acknowledges and is engaging with, for example (and without prejudice to its future positions on these), proposals by States and civil society organisations to include the slave trade and forced marriage as crimes against humanity, and the proposal to include the crime against humanity of ‘persecution’ as a standalone crime. Australia is also considering ways in which the draft articles could address conduct that has been described as ‘gender apartheid’. |
| Austria | Resumed session of the 6th Committee – April 2024 | But the [Rome Statute] definition represents a reasonable starting point of future negotiations. We do not exclude the possibility of further additions to this list, such as, for instance, gender-based apartheid. Furthermore, paragraph 3 of Article 2 safeguards that broader definitions of crimes against humanity are not precluded from arising. |
| Brazil | Resumed session of the 6th Committee – April 2024 | While Brazil supports the inclusion of the crimes already described in the draft articles that are connected with sexual and gender-based violence, we understand that these conducts do not exhaust all forms of sexual and gender-based violence of such gravity as that of a crime against humanity. It would be desirable to specify as much as possible, in the light of the principle of strict legality that guides criminal law, other forms of sexual and gender-based violence of comparable gravity. [...] [W]e are open to discuss the criminalization, in a future convention, of inhumane acts in the context of a regime of deliberate, systematic and complete subjugation of an entire social group based on their gender with the intention to maintain a regime, resulting in a severe deprivation of fundamental rights. |
| | Written comment on the draft crimes against humanity treaty – December 2023 | A future convention might also benefit from expressly criminalizing inhumane acts committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of deliberate, systematic and complete subjugation of an entire social group based on their gender , depriving it from fundamental rights, including the possibility to partake of the public sphere free from oppression, in a manner contrary to international law. For comparison purposes, when it comes to racial discrimination, the draft articles already provide for the punishment of a systematic subjugation of the same intensity through the crime of apartheid. |
| Chile | Resumed session of the 6th Committee – April 2024 | [We] have received information on the wish to incorporate a gender element in Article 2, paragraph 1, letter k. Based on the fact that there is a lacune in terms of protecting specifically important population groups, in this case, women and girls through prevention of punishment of an institutionalized regime that subjects a specific gender to oppression and domination by another gender. My delegation considers that this element could be discussed at greater in-depth during negotiations of other conventions with the aim of seeking consensus in this area. |

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| | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2024 | In this respect, we thank the incorporation of the concept of gender apartheid in the report and we urge states to continue their discussions and a possibility to recognize this concept in international law. |
| European Union | Resolution: European Parliament resolution of 19 September 2024 on the deteriorating situation of women in Afghanistan due to the recent adoption of the law on the “Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice” (2024/2803(RSP)) – September 2024 | whereas a recent Taliban decree, the so-called law on the ‘Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice’, extends these restrictions by even requiring that female voices not be heard in public, thus further depriving Afghan women of their fundamental rights and freedoms, amounting to gender apartheid; Calls for the EU to support the recognition of gender apartheid as a crime against humanity; |
| Iceland | Resumed session of the 6th Committee – April 2024 | Some delegations have also mentioned directly or indirectly the term gender apartheid. At this meeting, it has been mentioned by several states in their written comments. We thank these statements for bringing this matter to the table and appreciate the US delegation calling for thoughts of other states in their statements today. In our opinion, there is indeed a necessity of a discussion for other definitions of conduct, such as a possible application of gender to the definition of the crime of apartheid in future negotiations or slave trade as a separate crime. We listen with interest and hope for constructive further conversation. |
| Luxembourg | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2024 | Although gender apartheid is not yet recognized in international law as a crime against humanity, this expression best describes the oppression that defines the Taliban governance, and that is what we are also being told by Afghan women. Luxembourg hopes that the codification of this crime, as well as its universal rejection by all countries respecting international law, will lead to an end to its perpetration. We support your recommendations to the de facto authorities, especially the urgent obligation to restore equal, inclusive and equitable access for women and girls to comprehensive quality education. Women and girls must participate in any political debate regarding the future of Afghanistan, including the Doha process. |
| Malta | Resumed session of the 6th Committee – April 2024 | We consider that a discussion will need to be held to ensure that the articles are gender competent and reflect the broad spectrum of atrocity crimes that have a gender dimension. The ILC has already introduced elements in this regard, and we should continue to discuss how to better reflect crimes of persecution, apartheid, and others in the articles. This will enable victims and survivors - present and future - to hold perpetrators to account for the totality of crimes committed through systematized oppression. This also advances a survivor centric approach, which places the rights and agency of survivors and victims at the forefront of all actions. |

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| | <p>Written comment on the draft crimes against humanity treaty – December 2023</p> | <p>The current language of Article 2(2)(h) of the Draft Articles on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity replicates the definition of the crime against humanity of apartheid codified in Article 7(1)(j) of the 1998 Rome Statute.</p> <p>The inclusion of the crime of apartheid in the Rome Statute sought to close a lacuna in international criminal law, and with it a corresponding impunity gap. This accomplishment by States was founded upon a triple recognition: first, that apartheid, a crime of such gravity as would shock the conscience of humanity, could once again emerge; second, that it was a crime distinct from persecution on the ground of race, which was also codified; and third, that it was imperative that the international legal system be strengthened in its ability to bring future perpetrators of the crime of apartheid to justice.</p> <p>Malta thus strongly welcomes the inclusion of draft article 1(j). However, should there be a broad support in favour of amending the ILC draft articles, Malta considers that States should have a broad discussion on whether the definition of apartheid in Article 2 (h) should more accurately define the essence of a crime perpetrated by those who seek to institute and maintain a form of governance designed to systemically oppress and dominate a subset of society, including when based on gender.</p> <p>The crime of apartheid should be broadened to include inhumane acts committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one gender group over another gender group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime.</p> <p>Malta therefore proposes the following amendment (in underline) to the definition of the “crime of apartheid”, contained in Article 2(2)(h) of the draft articles:</p> <p>“the crime of apartheid” means inhumane acts of a character similar to those referred to in paragraph 1, committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups, or by one gender group over another gender group or groups, and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime.</p> <p>The codification of the crime of gender apartheid will enable victims and survivors – present and future – to hold perpetrators to account for the totality of crimes committed by systematized oppression which the crime of gender persecution alone cannot and does not capture.</p> |
| Mexico | <p>Resumed session of the 6th Committee – April 2024</p> | <p>We reiterate in this regard that for Mexico the draft articles must be analyzed from a cross-cutting gender focus. That is how crimes against humanity can affect people in more than one level because of their gender. We therefore believe that particular attention should be paid to this focus in future negotiations. This is why we believe that future negotiations will provide an opportunity to analyze other aspects and other crimes</p> |

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| | | such as trafficking of slaves, forced marriage, reproductive violence (as mentioned by the delegate of Brazil) and gender apartheid. |
| | Written comment on the draft crimes against humanity treaty – December 2023 | There is room for this draft article and, in general, the whole set of draft articles to be strengthened. In that regard, Mexico considers that, in future negotiations, it would be appropriate to analyse other aspects and new crimes such as slave trafficking, forced marriage and gender apartheid. In general, it will be important to strengthen the gender perspective, and the rights of victims and survivors. |
| | Oral Statement UNGA 6th Committee – October 2023 | Similarly, the substantive character of our discussions bringing together a large number of proposals reinforces in our view the need to make progress toward a new stage in negotiations taking the draft articles written by the ILC as the foundation in which we can all examine them appropriately. In this regard, we believe that there is room to solidify the current draft articles in areas such as the inclusion of slave trafficking, forced marriage, gender apartheid, and strengthening the gender perspective as well as the rights of victims and survivors. We hope to go deeper on these areas the next resumed session of the Sixth Committee. |
| The Philippines | Resumed session of the 6th Committee – April 2024 | The Philippines is open to further discussions related to existing definitions [...] bearing in mind shifts in our understanding of sexual and gender-based crimes over the past two decades which should inform our discussions, to consider the gender dimension in 2(2)(h). For instance, inhumane acts committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression over a gender and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime merits further conversation. |

| Statements Recognizing Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan <i>as of July 2025</i> | | |
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| Afghanistan | Afghanistan Review – April 2024 | <p>The Taliban has introduced a widespread, systematic, and institutionalized policy of oppression meant to erase women from, public, political, social life in a situation that international experts call akin to gender apartheid.</p> <p>Despite the Taliban pledges to honor and protect human rights, the people of Afghanistan are witnessing a systematic unraveling of their inherent and unassailable rights with women bearing the brunt of this degradation more than anyone.</p> |
| | UNSC: Situation in Afghanistan, UN Doc. S/PV.9515 – December 2023 | <p>Since their forced takeover, there has been a systematic erosion of human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls, leading to gender apartheid. That not only violates human rights but also directly contradicts Afghanistan's obligations under international law, including to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.</p> |
| | UNSC: Situation in Afghanistan, UN Doc. S/PV.9423 – September 2023 | <p>And that should be a priority for the international community in its efforts concerning Afghanistan. We echo the call for convening a special session of the General Assembly to address gender apartheid in Afghanistan, which was reiterated by the Afghan women representatives during last week's discussions. It is our duty to liberate Afghanistan from the shackles of gender apartheid, radicalization and extremism to enable our women, girls and young people to contribute to our society's growth and prosperity.</p> |
| Albania | UNSC: Situation in Afghanistan, UN Doc. S/PV.9515 – December 2023 | <p>Women and girls continue to be excluded and erased from public life. The Taliban have already institutionalized large-scale and systematic gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls. As a result, women and girls in Afghanistan are living in an apartheid regime. Despite those challenges, the people of Afghanistan remain resolute, with diverse groups working tirelessly to defend their rights and national values. Civil society, women, young people and political movements have mobilized to form a united national agenda. On 16 September, our Mission hosted a Zoom meeting with 85 representatives of the Afghan diaspora, independent Afghan political figures, human rights and women's rights activists and leaders of progressive and democratic parties and associations, both inside and outside Afghanistan. I would like to convey their essential messages and demands. First, they urge international partners and the Council to maintain pressure on the Taliban, demanding the reversal of anti-women policies, including education and work bans. They also call on the United Nations to recognize and classify the plight of Afghan women and girls as gender apartheid.</p> |

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| | <p>UNSC: Situation in Afghanistan, UN Doc. S/PV.9423 – September 2023</p> | <p>I will conclude with a core issue that everyone mentioned — the unacceptable situation of women and girls in Afghanistan. The de facto authorities in Afghanistan continue to violate every rule and principle that form the foundation of the international human rights system, as all our briefers and many colleagues highlighted. The Taliban continue to betray the Afghan people, who seek and deserve respect, dignity and justice. They continue to slide backwards, while the country and its people need the opposite. That is as regrettable as it is intolerable. We must continue to speak out firmly and strongly, just as 11 members of the Council, signatories of the Statement of Shared Commitments for the principles of Women, Peace and Security, did in a joint statement issued before today’s meeting. We cannot contemplate unparalleled, despicable and unacceptable gender discrimination policies. We need to call them by their name: yes, it is gender apartheid. The word is strong, but it is the right word. It reflects the horrible reality. And we concur with Ms. Bennoune — we cannot only repeat our statements and condemnation here and elsewhere; we must do more. It is our collective responsibility to explore avenues for accountability and hold those responsible for gender persecution to account. We must not let those violations go unpunished. We must use all the tools at our disposal to ensure that the perpetrators of gender-based discrimination face the full weight of justice for violations of international conventions such as the Convention on the Political Rights of Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women — conventions to which Afghanistan is a party.</p> |
| | <p>UNSC: Situation in Afghanistan, UN Doc. S/PV.9227 – December 2022</p> | <p>The draconian and misogynistic Taliban rule does not reflect Afghans’ religion, culture or values. The ruthless rulers are simply disfiguring Afghanistan into Talibanistan, making it a gender-apartheid regime.</p> |

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| Canada | Ambassador Bob Rae remarks on World Press Freedom Day – May 2025 | That is a form of oppression which, frankly, really means we're living in a situation of modern apartheid — of a gender apartheid. It discriminates and oppresses women for one reason alone: because they are women. |
| Chile | Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – February 2025 | Chile expresses its deep concern about the findings in the SR's presentation. His reports confirm our fears. Afghanistan is the epicenter of an institutionalized system of discrimination and gender-based persecution, with facts that constitute crimes against humanity. The so-called law on promoting virtue and preventing vice has only entrenched systematic oppression with a particular impact on women, girls, and people of diverse gender or sexual orientation. This law has institutionalized what some people term gender apartheid. Women are being erased from society, deprived of their most fundamental basic rights, and subjected to an existence governed by repression and fear. Chile refuses to be a silent witness to these atrocities. We will not stand by passively while half of Afghanistan's population is stripped of its dignity, its autonomy, and its rights. That is why Chile, along with other countries, last November, presented a referral of the situation in Afghanistan to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, given the worsening of conditions and the gravity of the situation for all Afghan women and girls, and we welcome the prosecutor's decision to request arrest warrants for crimes against humanity on gender-based persecution grounds. |
| Costa Rica | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2024 | Costa Rica would once again like to express its concern of the systematic violation of human rights, gender apartheid, and disdain for human dignity of women and girls in Afghanistan. Our country regrets that the setting up of a system with its discriminatory policies and related misogynist decrees has led to a total isolation of women and girls under the architecture of oppression, deny the right to education rights, the empowerment of women and girls. |
| | Afghanistan Review – April 2024 | Costa Rica would like to express its concern about the disruption to the rule of law and the generalized system of violence and human rights violations in Afghanistan, including the gender apartheid and widespread violence against women and girls as well as human rights defenders and civil society organizations. |

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| Ecuador | UNSC: Situation in Afghanistan, UN Doc. S/PV.9423 – September 2023 | The persistence with which the Taliban regime continues its violations against human rights and fundamental freedoms is the most worrisome, specifically regarding the situation of women and girls, given the deepening of its policies on the refusal to allow work and education, as well as their resistance to repealing the edicts that institutionalize gender discrimination and that practically constitute apartheid. |
| European Union | Resolution: European Parliament resolution of 5 October 2023 on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, in particular the persecution of former government officials (2023/2881(RSP)) – October 2023 | Deplores the level of human rights abuses in Afghanistan, which have risen exponentially since the Taliban takeover; denounces in the strongest terms all human rights violations in the country, including the widespread persecution of former government officials and ANDSF members, the staggering oppression of women and girls and policy of gender apartheid, and the targeting of civil society organisations and human rights defenders; |
| | Human Rights: Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the 25th EU-NGO Forum for Human Rights – April 2023 | Who remembers what has been happening in Kabul? Afghanistan has disappeared from the media. In Afghanistan, you have a “gender apartheid”. I think this is a good way of calling what is happening there: a “gender apartheid”. Not by the colour of the skin, but by gender. Woman and girls are deprived from going to the schools, and an awful dictatorship is ruling the country. |
| | Statement: Taliban must stop gender apartheid now – April 2023 | <p>On behalf of the EP Delegation for relations with Afghanistan, I would like to strongly condemn the banning of Afghan women decides by the Taliban regime from working in the UN in Afghanistan.</p> <p>This is just another brick in the wall of gender apartheid perpetrated in an exponential way and without any respect for human rights and international Treaties subscribed by Afghanistan.</p> <p>I urge the regime to stop this situation now and deliver its promises immediately.</p> <p>Women' continue deletion from society is outrageous; it is erasing all social progress of the last twenty years and compromising the future of Afghanistan.</p> |

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| | | <p>Women are half of society. Promoting women's participation and ensuring gender issues are amongst key objectives of the European Parliament's approach to democracy support. This situation is aggravating the dreadful conditions of not only women and girls, but the entire Afghan society.</p> <p>Humanitarian aid provided by EU has to match our principle and I call for this to be respected. Only the Taliban regime will be held responsible for aggravating the suffering it is inflicting to its citizens.</p> <p>I wish to extend my sympathy to Afghan women, girls, and to all citizens that are believing in them, and they are fighting to build a better society. I strongly deplore the persecution and arrests of human rights defenders, such as education rights activist Matiullah Wesa, and urge for their immediate and unconditional release. D-AF will always stand by them.</p> |
| | United Nations: Press remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell after his address at the UN Security Council – February 2023 | <p>In Afghanistan, where we will not tolerate the “gender apartheid” that the Taliban regime is installing. It is a real “gender apartheid”. And we will not continue doing business as usual with the [de facto] Afghan government, but we cannot abandon the Afghan women to be punished twice – first, by the Taliban’s decision and then, second, by us cutting development support.</p> |
| | Joint statement: Women in Afghanistan have become victims of gender apartheid – February 2023 | <p>The Taliban regime in Afghanistan is reversing the progress made in the last twenty years and life in the country is becoming a misery. Half of its population - Afghan women and girls - have become victims of gender apartheid. We call once again for all gender-based restrictions on women to be lifted so that they can pursue their education, actively participate in the labour market and public life in Afghanistan. The necessary measures must be taken to combat violence against women and girls, including forced marriage and intimate partner violence, and to hold perpetrators accountable without delay; the nationwide support system for victims must be reopened.</p> <p>The European Union and the rest of the world cannot accept this situation and remain silent. The UN framework needs to be used to find a solution and to facilitate the transition from the Taliban totalitarian regime towards a balanced situation that involves women and minorities in the decision-making process.</p> <p>Aid to Afghanistan must continue to restore and ensure the rights of women and girls. For the sake of Afghans and for future generations, we must not allow the Taliban to further isolate the country.</p> <p>Since taking power in August 2021, the Taliban have imposed a long list of rules and policies that comprehensively prevent women and girls from exercising their fundamental rights, including to expression, movement, work, and education.</p> |

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| | | In January, Musal Nabizada, a young former politician, was shot dead in her home. She had served as a Member of Afghanistan's democratic institutions and worked for NGOs that are against the increasing restrictions on Afghan women's rights and freedoms. In December last year, the Taliban banned women from universities, further limiting their education after already excluding girls from secondary schools last March. On 24 December, Afghan women were banned from working for NGOs, bringing the delivery of many essential services and aid to a halt. |
| | Resolution: European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2022 on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, especially the deterioration of women's rights and attacks against educational institutions (2022/2955(RSP)) – November 2022 | Condemns the staggering regression in women and girls' exercise of their rights under the Taliban, a situation that currently qualifies as a gender apartheid; condemns the additional restrictions imposed by the Taliban on women's freedom of movement; calls on the de facto authorities of Afghanistan to ensure that all gender-based restrictions on women are lifted and that they can again actively participate in public life in Afghanistan; stresses that this must be a key condition for any engagement of the international community with the Taliban; |
| Italy | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett - June 2024 | It is essential that the international community through this council continues to address the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, which remains extremely dire, with particular regard to the gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls described in the report as gender apartheid. |
| Luxembourg | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan - February 2025 | Luxembourg is alarmed by the law on vice and virtue which confirms and extends the severe restrictions imposed by the Taliban since they returned to power, further institutionalizing a system of oppression, discrimination, and control. Systematic persecution against Afghan women and girls amounts to gender-based apartheid. Discriminatory laws that deny women and girls the right to education, right to work, right to freedom of movement and expression are erasing their presence in public spaces |
| | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – March 2024 | Luxembourg aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. Afghanistan has experienced the replacement of the rule of law with the rule of force, where gender-based violence is a tool of systematic oppression. Women and girls are erased from public life. Peaceful dissent is repressed. We commend the work of the Special Rapporteur on the definition of the crime against humanity that he defines as a form of gender-based apartheid. This work, carried out in partnership with the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls and civil society. De facto authorities must recognize human dignity and protect the rights of all people in Afghanistan, and we call on them to follow the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur. |
| | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard | We thank the Special Rapporteur for his update, which confirms the fact that the human rights situation in Afghanistan is continuously deteriorating. Despite promises made, the de facto authorities continue to backslide on the rights of women and girls and to violently persecute the former members of the Defense and Security Forces. |

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| | Bennett – September 2023 | Together with the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, you have suggested that the situation of structural discrimination against women and girls could be compared to a situation of war-based apartheid. |
| | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2023 | <p>Luxembourg fully aligns itself with the declaration made by the European Union. My delegation thanks the Working Group and the Special Rapporteur for this report and reiterates its full support for their mandates.</p> <p>We see that this is a list of successive restrictions which make the lives of Afghans more and more unbearable. By prohibiting women from working for the United Nations, the Taliban are imposing their own law on the United Nations. In addition to being a flagrant violation of women's rights, this will have serious consequences for women and girls who require humanitarian aid. Humanitarian workers who are women are essential in order to reach women and girls in a safe and efficient manner.</p> <p>The Taliban are prohibiting millions of girls from their right to education and compromising their future prospects and increasing their vulnerability. In short, the Taliban is committing active discrimination and generalized systematic violence against women and girls. We have heard the recommendation that the council should request a report on gender apartheid and take measures in order to ensure that those who are perpetrating persecution against women and girls are held responsible. The countries that are maintaining diplomatic commercial relations with the de facto authorities have increased responsibility in terms of requesting concessions to protect and implement the rights of women and girls. Thank you.</p> |

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| Malta | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2025 | Since the Taliban's return to power, women and girls have faced systematic exclusion from public life. Over seventy edicts and directives have been issued that severely restrict their rights to education, employment, freedom of movement, and access to justice. We are alarmed by the dismantling of legal protections for survivors of gender-based violence, and the closure of women's shelters. Access to justice is a cornerstone of human rights. A society that excludes half of its population cannot prosper. The systematic denial of the human rights of women and girls in Afghanistan is not only a grave injustice, it is a barrier to any form of sustainable peace, stability, or development. We call on the de-facto authorities to restore women and girls' access to justice and ensure their equal participation in all aspects of society. In conclusion, we iterate our support for the Special Reporter and all other UN structures and mechanisms assisting Afghanistan. |
| Montenegro | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2023 | As experts testified, the Taliban's discriminatory policies and the harsh enforcement methods fit into the pattern of large scale systemic violations of women and girls' fundamental rights toward an absolute gender segregation in Afghanistan. As such, it constitutes gender persecution and institutionalized framework of gender apartheid and may amount to crimes against humanity. It is also exemplified by the recent ban on Afghanistan's women working for the United Nations, which impinges on the UN Charter, the principle of equality and non-discrimination, and the fundamental spirit and norms of international human rights law. We reiterate our call to the Taliban to revoke their discriminatory policies and all restrictions and barriers to women's rights and abide by Afghanistan's obligations under international law. We further call on the Taliban to address ongoing human rights violations and re-establish legal protections and accountability mechanisms for gender-based violence and denial of rights by respecting the legal framework in force prior to August 2021. |
| | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2025 | As reported, the Taliban have transformed the legal and judicial system to enforce, entrench and sustain the group's ideological, repressive and misogynistic model of governance and to solidify their control over all of Afghan society. We strongly condemn the widespread, systematic and institutionalized system of extreme gender-based discrimination and exclusion of women and girls under Taliban rule. This may amount to gender-based persecution, a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute, or gender apartheid, as increasingly termed. |

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| Namibia | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2023 | <p>Namibia thanks the Special Rapporteur and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls for their joint report on the widespread and systemic discrimination that Afghan women continue to be subjected to, especially after the de facto authorities assumed power on 15 August 2021.</p> <p>Mr. President, as one of the countries that championed the adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, on women, peace and security, Namibia continues to actively promote universal respect for the rights of women and girls. It is therefore appalling to note that Afghanistan today stands as the only country in the world where women are totally excluded from political and public life. We further bemoan the maintenance of restrictions on the rights of women and girls to education, employment, and freedom of movement. The lack of accountability for human rights violations in Afghanistan continues to foster great violations as ever despite the barrier imposed on women from working for international and non-governmental organizations.</p> <p>Namibia fully supports the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur and the Working Group for the Human Rights Council to make a report on gender apartheid as an institutionalized system of discrimination, segregation, humiliation, and exclusion of women and girls in Afghanistan.</p> |
| Netherlands | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2023 | <p>We thank the Special Rapporteur and the Working Group for their alarming report on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan. The Netherlands continues to be deeply concerned about a pattern of large-scale systematic violations of human rights of Afghan women and girls, which qualifies as gender persecution and an institutionalized framework of gender apartheid.</p> <p>It is key to ensure that these serious human rights violations are thoroughly investigated in order to provide justice for victims and survivors and hold perpetrators accountable. It once again highlights that Afghan women's and girls' rights should remain a top priority of the international community and full, equal, and meaningful participation of Afghan women from within Afghanistan in decision-making processes should be ensured. The continuing trend of repressive measures taken against women and girls in Afghanistan is detrimental to the development and future of all of Afghanistan.</p> <p>We continue to urge a Taliban to respect Afghan women's and girls' rights as a matter of urgency. We ask the panelists, what measures can states take to ensure that perpetrators and complicit actors can be held accountable? I thank you.</p> |
| Peru | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – September 2023 | <p>Peru is gravely concerned at the information provided, particularly the ongoing gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls. These include threats to their physical integrity, gender-based violence, and restrictions on the right to education, work, sexual and reproductive health, and other rights. This can be considered gender apartheid. Women and girls in Afghanistan deserve to live in peace, free from gender-based violence and with full human rights.</p> |

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| South Africa | <p>UNGA Side-Event: Combating Gender Apartheid: The Situation of Women and Girls in Afghanistan – September 2023</p> | <p>I think the important discussion point for today is, is the systemic oppression one that can be approximated to not only that a crime against humanity, but the systematic nature which I think Richard Bennett and Dorothy Estrada have written about, points to a form of oppression that is all encompassing, that takes away all the rights, of the women in Afghanistan. Which begs us to look at what are the mechanisms to hold the perpetrators accountable. It's often difficult to hold legitimate states accountable for crimes against humanity, even the crime of apartheid. And we're seeing that the crime of apartheid is being used in various other settings. We are now introducing the term of gender apartheid, in the context of not only a crime against humanity, but also the crime of apartheid. And I think it's important that we do that. So that we can look at how do we keep the (I'm not sure is the de-facto authorities the right term to use,) how do we get the international community to hold the individuals to account as well. Because often the crimes that perpetrated through an institutional framework have individuals that make the ultimate decision. And I think that's why in the context of the ICC, command and superior responsibility is important.</p> <p>...</p> <p>So I'm not going to spend a lot of time speaking about South Africa's apartheid, because I do think that often people, when they hear the term apartheid, think about South Africa, but also Namibia because also the issues of occupation. You know, the crime of apartheid, and in this case the crime of gender apartheid is something that we can find in various pockets of international law. So just to echo what I think the Ambassador of Malta is saying, is how do we use the international community to hold the perpetrators of this heinous form of oppression accountable.</p> |
| | <p>Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2023</p> | <p>Women and girls in Afghanistan see widespread discrimination, which runs country to the VDPA, whose thirtieth anniversary we commemorate this year. The VDPA specifies that the human rights of women and girls are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. And as such, the situation in Afghanistan cannot be countenanced by this council.</p> <p>Indeed, as the report of the Special Rapporteur and the Working Group highlights, women and girls in Afghanistan are suffering from some of the most pernicious human rights violations unparalleled elsewhere in the world. Among others, the status decrees restricting their ability to engage in society serve as but one of many examples of this. These decrees are aimed at removing women and girls from all spheres of public life and form part of a system of institutionalized and systematic gender-based discrimination and violence which may amount to a crime against humanity of gender persecution.</p> <p>As a country that prizes the promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls, my delegation therefore calls on the international community to take action against what the report describes as gender apartheid, much like it did in support of South Africa's struggle against racial apartheid. We owe this to the bravery displayed by women and girls in Afghanistan that we salute today, who despite threats and intimidation continue to be the primary advocates for their rights.</p> |

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| Spain | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – September 2023 | <p>We thank the Special Rapporteur for the update and support his work and that of the High Commissioner in line with the EU statements. Spain is gravely concerned by the human rights violations in Afghanistan. We cannot accept as normal the dilution of the rule of law and fundamental freedoms.</p> <p>We reiterate that summary executions, torture, and persecution of human rights defenders, minorities, journalists, and LGBT persons are incompatible with international law. A lack of access by women and girls to education and restrictions on their participation in public life and economic life reflect the systematic discrimination by the Taliban against women over the past two years. Contrary to the conventions to which Afghanistan is party, these could be the crime of gender apartheid. Human rights abuses cannot remain unpunished, and the entire UN system as well as the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court have a role to play. Thank you.</p> |
| Ukraine | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2024 | <p>We reiterate our serious concerns at the Taliban's exclusion of women from participation in Afghan society, blocking their access to basic rights to education, health and work in the public sector, with the UN or international NGOs. The Taliban's inhumane ideology, which considers women only as objects for exploitation, including debt bondage, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and other forms of humiliation, is nothing less than a deliberate policy of gender apartheid. Moreover, the practices of degrading human dignity and violent deprivation of rights and freedoms, have become a horrific reality not only for women and girls, but also for members of ethnic and religious minorities, persons with disabilities and LGBTQI+ communities in Afghanistan.</p> <p>We urge the Taliban to stop depriving Afghans, especially women and girls, of their inherent rights and to put an end to all forms of abuse.</p> <p>Special Rapporteur, currently, we are witnessing the commission of inhuman acts with the intent to maintain an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression of and domination over women in Afghanistan. What more should the international community and this Council do to stop this heinous crime?</p> |
| | Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennett – June 2025 | <p>We remain gravely concerned about the widespread, systematic, and institutionalized discrimination against women and girls in Afghanistan which may amount to crimes against humanity and has been described among Afghan women as gender apartheid. The dismantling of legal protection, the imposition of repressive edicts and exclusion of women from public and professional life, have critically undermined access to justice. Particularly alarming are the intersecting forms of discrimination affecting minorities, LGBTQIA+, disabled, rural, displaced, and female headed households. Ukraine strongly condemns the return of corporal punishment and instrumentalization of the justice system to reinforce repression. We are deeply troubled by persecution of former female security personnel, civil society members and complete removal of women from the judiciary. We urge the Taliban to immediately seize all human rights violations, restore protections for women and girls, and end its defiance of international human rights law as principles of UN charter.</p> |