

Afghan Women Denounce "Horrible" Attacks on Civilians by NATO and the Taliban

Kabul, March 8, 2010: Two prominent advocates for women's rights in Afghanistan have issued an impassioned appeal to NATO and the Taliban to eliminate civilian casualties and improve the security of Afghan women.

In a joint statement on the occasion of International Women's Day (March 8), the [Afghan Womens Network \(AWN\)](#) and Civil Society Human Rights Network (CSHRN) condemn a series of recent NATO bombings and "horrible and bloody actions" by the Taliban, which have killed scores of civilians, including women. AWN is a partner of The Advocacy Project.

The result of the attacks, says the statement, has been to add to the brutalization of women caused by "domestic violence, rape and abuses, abduction of young girls, humiliation of women by warlords and criminals, lack of gender balance, (and the) misinterpretation of religious values concerning women and deterioration of the role of Afghan women."

The statement follows an escalation of the war in Afghanistan, and a series of attacks which have caused civilian casualties. According to independent sources, 163 civilians were killed in January and February, with 92 deaths attributed to insurgents and 71 to the government and NATO forces. At least 50 civilians were killed in three NATO operations within days of each other.

The two advocates are equally critical of both sides. They accuse the Taliban of launching indiscriminate attacks and using civilian houses as shelters "against all basic human rights and International Humanitarian Law conditions."

But the statement is also highly critical of NATO. "We seriously ask the international military forces to avoid all kinds of mistakes during their operations that result civilian casualties. We ask them do not repeat the mistakes. The Afghan people are tired of hearing



repeatedly statements of apologies of the NATO forces to Afghan citizens."

The statement demands that civilians be evacuated from conflict areas, and issues a series of demands to other key players in the Afghan crisis. It calls on President Hamid Karzai to appoint more women to his cabinet; asks the international media to cover women's issues; requests funding for women's programs from international agencies; and asks the Afghan police to provide greater security for women.

"Both institutions express their deepest concerns about broadening of violence in the country. We wish [Peace], security and stability in Afghanistan."

- Read the [AWN and CSHRN statement](#)
- For more about the [AWN](#)