

Press Release

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Urgent Call to Action: Global Institutions Must Provide Scholarships for Afghan Women and Girls

The recent suspension of USAID funding has left over **240 Afghan female students** without access to education, jeopardizing their futures and safety. Friba Rezayee, Founder and Executive Director of Women Leaders of Tomorrow, urgently appeals to global educational institutions to step in and provide scholarships for these young women.

Afghanistan remains under Taliban rule, where education for women and girls beyond the third grade is banned. Violators face severe punishment, including flogging, imprisonment, torture, or even death. The Taliban's oppressive policies have deprived **1.4 million girls** of schooling since their return to power in 2021, with **80% of Afghan school-age girls**—approximately **2.5 million**—currently excluded from education.

Last month, **240 young Afghan women**, many studying at the American University of Afghanistan in Qatar, were informed that their scholarships had been terminated due to USAID cuts. They now face the prospect of returning to Afghanistan, where they risk forced marriages, imprisonment, or worse under Taliban rule.

“These women are not just students; they are future leaders who hold the promise of rebuilding Afghanistan,” says Rezayee. “We need immediate action from global post-secondary institutions in Canada, Australia, Europe, and beyond to create scholarship opportunities. Without this support, these women face an uncertain and dangerous future.”

The Dire Need for Global Support

The Taliban's systematic attack on women's education is a violation of human rights with devastating societal consequences. Afghanistan is now the only country globally that bans female education beyond primary school. This has led to a sharp decline in university enrollment—down **53% since 2021**—and a looming shortage of skilled professionals such as doctors and teachers.

Under Rezayee's leadership, Women Leaders of Tomorrow has extensive experience supporting Afghan women's education in Canada. The organization is prepared to collaborate with universities by offering pre-arrival and post-arrival services to help students succeed.

A Call for Action

Rezayee's message is clear: "We are in desperate need of scholarship positions for 240 Afghan women and girls so they can continue their education with dignity and purpose. I urge global institutions to act now."

The stakes are high. Without intervention, another generation of Afghan women will lose access to education forever—a loss not only for Afghanistan but for the world.

Join Us at Women Leaders of Tomorrow: Help secure the future of Afghan women by offering scholarships or funding opportunities. Together, we can ensure these young leaders continue their education and contribute to a brighter future for Afghanistan.

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