

FCDO Minister at UN to discuss the future for Afghan women and girls

News story

FCDO Minister of State for the UN, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon visited the United Nations Headquarters in New York last week for a series of meetings.



He told the UN Security Council during an open debate on women, peace and security, that the rights of women and girls must be central to any discussions with the Taliban. He called for the international community to ensure women are part of the conversation on the nation's future. He also said that negotiating teams and national delegations must include women and gender expertise.

The UK is a champion of girls' education and empowerment, including in Afghanistan where women's voices have been much less prominent since the Taliban takeover, and girls are not yet able to return to secondary school throughout the country.

FCDO Minister of State for the UN, Lord Ahmad said:

We will judge the Taliban by its actions not its words, and we will work through diplomatic, economic and development channels to help the Afghan people.

The Taliban must ensure and declare that girls of all ages will be able to attend school. All Afghan women and girls deserve to live in safety, security and dignity. This includes their right to education and to work. We have been clear that the Taliban will be held accountable for their actions, including on human rights.

Whilst in New York, the Minister also attended a high-level event with the Qatar Mission, UN Women, and Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. During that event, he heard from a panel of Afghan women leaders,

and civil society representatives, and was able to discuss with them directly how the UK can best support Afghan women and girls.

During his time in the US, the Minister also visited Washington DC for bilateral discussions with counterparts. Whilst there he met Assistant Secretary Lu to discuss how the US and UK are working to safeguard the rights of women and minority communities in Afghanistan. In addition he spoke to Under Secretary of State Uzra Zeya about human rights priorities shared by the UK and US, and met with the think tank community to talk about a better future for the Afghan people.

Notes to Editors

- The UN Security Council debate marked the 21st anniversary of the UN's first Security Council resolution on women, peace and security

Published 25 October 2021