

May 2022: Australia issues joint statement with foreign ministers on the Taliban's increasing restrictions on women and girls in Afghanistan

Joint statement from: the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

"Afghan women and girls make enormous contributions to their country. Achieving peace, stability and economic development requires their equal participation in shaping Afghanistan's future.

"We remain deeply concerned by the continued restrictions on girls' access to education in Afghanistan, and call on the Taliban to respect the right to education and adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students.

"We are deeply disappointed about escalating restrictions imposed by the Taliban that impact on the human rights of Afghan women.

"The Taliban's directive that women and girls must cover themselves in public and leave home only in cases of necessity, and with a man, restricts their universal and inalienable human rights. We deplore that family members could be punished to enforce compliance with these restrictions.

"Afghan women should be free to choose how they express themselves in accordance with their faith and have the right to move freely in society.

"The international community cannot consider these recent directives as isolated decisions. The Taliban have taken other actions that limit the human rights of women and girls.

"These include their rights to education, work and freedom of movement, opinion and expression through restrictions on unaccompanied travel, participation in the workforce, and ability to express themselves openly.

"These decisions contradict repeated Taliban assurances to respect and protect the human rights of all Afghans.

"All Afghans should be able to enjoy their fundamental human rights. These rights are indivisible and inalienable, expressed in international human rights law, and endorsed by all members of the United Nations.

"We call on the Taliban to reconsider decisions which constrain the right of women and girls to make their own choices, gain an education, work, and

participate equally in society.

“We will continue to judge the Taliban on their actions, not their words.”