

URGENT ACTION

FOUR WOMEN PROTESTORS RELEASED

Women human rights defenders and protestors Zholia Parsi, Neda Parwani, Parisa Azada, and Manizha Seddiqi have been released after several months of arbitrary detention.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

The Taliban arbitrarily arrested and detained four prominent women human rights defenders (WHRDs) Parisa Azada, Neda Parwani, Zholia Parsi, and Manizha Seddiqi, between September and November 2023. These four WHRDs did not have access to lawyers or regular family visits while in detention and were at risk of torture and other forms of ill-treatment. They had not been charged with any offences. Neda and Zholia's family members were also arrested.

From November 2023 we campaigned extensively for the release of these women human rights defenders in various ways. These efforts included sending individual and group letters to the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence and promoting their Urgent Action on social media platforms. The aim was to raise questions about the Taliban's unlawful arrest, the absence of due process in their cases, and the ongoing violation of these WHRDs' right to freedom. Throughout this period, their family members, who are currently residing outside Afghanistan, provided us with regular updates regarding the family's prison visits to these WHRDs and underscored the need for sustained actions for their release. The family members perceived these efforts as exerting strong pressure on the Taliban, and that their release would not have been possible without the sustained pressure created through our campaigning.

These four WHRDs and protestors were released on different dates between December 2023 to April 2024. Zholia Parsi was released on 18 December 2023, Neda Parwani on 14 December 2023, Parisa Azada on 27 December 2023, and Manizha Seddiqi on 7 April 2024. They are currently residing in Afghanistan with their immediate family members.

Since taking control of Kabul in August 2021, the Taliban de facto authorities have increasingly violated the rights of women and girls, prohibiting their political participation and involvement in public life. The policies adopted by the Taliban de facto authorities have curtailed the rights to freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, as well as the rights to equality and non-discrimination. Despite this, women have led peaceful protests against the Taliban in various Afghan cities, including Kabul, Faizabad, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Zholia Parsi, Neda Parwani, Parisa Azada, and Manizha Seddiqi (She/her as preferred pronouns for each of them)

THIS IS THE THIRD AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 112/23

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/7611/2024/en/>

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