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Afghanistan: No justice and security for women

The international community has failed to fulfil its promises to bring freedom and equality to the women of Afghanistan, Amnesty International said in a report released today.

"Nearly two years on, discrimination, violence, and insecurity remain rife, despite promises by world leaders, including President Bush and US Secretary of State Colin Powell, that the war in Afghanistan would bring liberation for women," the organization emphasized.

The new report *"Afghanistan: No one listens to us and no one treats us as human beings. Justice denied to women"* documents Afghan women's concerns about widespread domestic violence, forced marriage, and rape by armed groups. In some cases underage girls as young as eight years old are married to much older men.

"This situation is unacceptable and calls for urgent action," Amnesty International said.

The report also highlights how women in Afghanistan have no recourse to justice. Despite the lifting of rules limiting their freedom of movement, women are prevented from seeking redress because of barriers in society and in the community in many areas. Even when a woman is able to approach the police or the courts, she faces extreme discrimination.

"The current criminal justice system is simply unwilling or unable to address issues of violence against women," the organization continued. "At the moment it is more likely to violate the rights of women than to protect and uphold their rights."

The new report outlines a number of immediate steps the Afghan government and international community should take to begin to deliver on its promise of ensuring justice for the women of Afghanistan. Foremost is the provision of security through an expansion of an international peace keeping force outside Kabul to create an environment in which the rule of law can be established.

"Women's rights protections cannot be meaningfully established without the rule of law."

The organization further calls on the international community to coordinate efforts to integrate the protection of women's rights into the reconstruction of police, legal reforms, and the establishment of courts.

For the full text of the report, please go to:

"Afghanistan: No one listens to us and no one treats us as human beings. Justice denied to women"
<http://www.web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110232003>

For other recent reports on Afghanistan please go to:

"Afghanistan: Re-establishing the rule of law"
<http://www.web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110212003>

"Afghanistan: Crumbling prison system desperately in need of repair"
<http://www.web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110172003>

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<http://www.web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110142003>

"Afghanistan: Police reconstruction essential for the protection of human rights"
<http://www.web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110032003>

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