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HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER IN AFGHANISTAN

SEMINAR AND PRESS BRIEFING 23 MARCH 1998 LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Amnesty International and Professor Fred Halliday of the LSE have jointly organized a seminar on human rights and gender in Afghanistan. Topics to be addressed include: the effect of Taleban policies on women; women's human rights in Afghanistan; the future of humanitarian assistance; and the role of companies in Afghanistan. The seminar will explore possibilities for reversing discriminatory policies against women.

The emergence of the Taleban in 1994 created a new layer of human rights abuse against women, who are banned from employment, education and leaving home without a male relative. Women who wear nail varnish could have their fingers chopped off, and thousands have been beaten in the streets for defying Taleban orders. Women's access to health care has been severely limited, as women are not allowed to be treated by male doctors.

The continuing war in Afghanistan has affected the work of humanitarian agencies -- particularly in their work with women and their own gender policies. Companies seeking to open up the country as part of broader development in the region also have a role to play in protecting and promoting human rights.

Speakers at the seminar include women lawyers and human rights activists from Afghanistan and elsewhere; representatives of Medecins Sans Frontieres, Afghan Aid; companies investing in the region as well as Amnesty International's Researcher on Afghanistan and Professor Halliday.

The seminar is open by invitation to selected journalists. In addition, at 5pm there will be a press briefing at the LSE at which the outcome of the seminar will be presented and some participants will be available for interview.

Details:

- 9.30-4pm, 23 March 1998: Vera Anstey Room, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE
- 5pm, PRESS BRIEFING

If you would like to attend the seminar, please contact: Signe Poulsen, Amnesty International, Tel: (0171) 413 5649. There will be no admission to the seminar without prior invitation