

Taliban Rules for Women

The following list offers only an abbreviated glimpse of the lives Afghan women are forced to lead under the Taliban, and cannot begin to reflect the depth of female deprivations and sufferings. Taliban treat women worse than they treat animals. In fact, even as Taliban declare the keeping of caged birds and animals illegal, they imprison Afghan women within the four walls of their own houses.

Taliban restrictions and mistreatment of women include the:

1. Complete ban on women's work outside the home, which also applies to female teachers, engineers and most professionals. Only a few female doctors and nurses are allowed to work in some hospitals in Kabul.
2. Complete ban on women's activity outside the home unless accompanied by a *mahram*
3. Ban on women dealing with male shopkeepers.
4. Ban on women being treated by male doctors.
5. Ban on women studying at schools, universities or any other educational institution. (Taliban have converted girls' schools into religious seminaries.)
6. Requirement that women wear a long veil (burqa), which covers them from head to toe.
7. Whipping, beating and verbal abuse of women not clothed in accordance with Taliban rules, or of women unaccompanied by a mahram.
8. Whipping of women in public for having non-covered ankles.
9. Public stoning of women accused of having sex outside marriage.
10. Ban on the use of cosmetics. (Many women with painted nails have had fingers cut off).
11. Ban on women talking or shaking hands with non-*mahram* males.
12. Ban on women laughing loudly. (No stranger should hear a woman's voice).
13. Ban on women wearing high heel shoes, which would produce sound while walking. (A man must not hear a woman's footsteps.)
14. Ban on women riding in a taxi without a mahram.
15. Ban on women's presence in radio, television or public gatherings of any kind.
16. Ban on women playing sports or entering a sport center or club.
17. Ban on women riding bicycles or motorcycles, even with their *mahrams*.
18. Ban on women's wearing brightly colored clothes. In Taliban terms, these are "sexually attracting colors."
19. Ban on women gathering for festive occasions or for any recreational purpose.
20. Ban on women washing clothes next to rivers or in a public place.
21. Modification of all place names including the word "women." For example, "women's garden" has been renamed "spring garden".
22. Ban on women appearing on the balconies of their apartments or houses.
23. Compulsory painting of all windows, so women cannot be seen from outside their homes.
24. Ban on male tailors taking women's measurements or sewing women's clothes.
25. Ban on males and females traveling on the same bus.
26. Ban on flared (wide) pant-legs, even under a burqa.
27. Ban on the photographing or filming of women.
28. Ban on women's pictures printed in newspapers and books, or hung on the walls of houses and shops.

Source: Modified from the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan www.rawa.org