

# Afghan Feminist: 'The Taliban and My Own Family Will Come for Me'

by Phyllis Chesler



**American troops are withdrawing from Afghanistan**, leaving the country's women to Taliban's rule. I said that I would not publish [anything further](#) at this time about the tragedy of Afghan women. And yet—one brave soul just wrote to me at length and urged me to publish her words, for her sake, and for the sake of hundreds of other women in her position.

Together, can we at least save this one woman's life? Here are excerpted portions of her letter from the front lines of the war against women:

*Dear Phyllis,*

*The situation is extremely unstable and gets worse every day that passes. Women are in a bad mental condition. Those who have money and have worked with American funded organizations*

are leaving Afghanistan. Everyone is desperate to find a way to immigrate from the country. Many choose to risk their life and to pay lots of money to smugglers to take them out of the country. Single girls like me who have no supporters but themselves, do not know what to do and where to ask for help. I, personally, cannot sleep at night because of all the negative thoughts that come to my mind about the dark future that is waiting for me and I do not know what will happen to me.

Women all over the country are worried about the increase of violence against them. Those women that have a professional background are the ones who are targeted by the opposition groups. Many of them have received warnings and many have already been killed. Many barriers are awaiting women under the leadership of Taliban. Those who have been activists, professionals, and who have fought for women's rights and equality are those who will face serious threats because according to Taliban's Islamic regime they are "against" the rules and regulations of Islam.

I have also heard that in some provinces that Taliban has taken over the control, young single girls are threatened to be forcibly married to Taliban. Some parents have decided to sacrifice their young girls to marry with Taliban only to get Taliban's satisfaction so that they are safe from the coming attacks they would face if they wouldn't have become relatives with Taliban.

Can you kindly please save my life? People know that I am a single girl, with a medical degree, who has worked with Europeans and Americans doing research on matters of health, mainly women's health. I've broken the conservative rules of my society. Relatives have repeatedly warned me and my family that I must quit my job or be responsible for the consequences. Some relatives asked for my hand but I refused

*because I did not want to leave my job.*

*I cannot imagine sitting here in Afghanistan after American forces withdraw. I will be one of the first persons that would be targeted by my relatives or if that does not happen, I could be forcibly married or killed if I continue to refuse.*

*As a young girl, I was not allowed to take important decisions about life. I always suffered from the inequality that existed in our society. Therefore, I started to voluntarily fight for women and girl's rights. My parents were warned that what I was doing was against the rules and they stopped me. I found ways to continue. I did research about Afghan women's health that was published abroad. But, in addition to my medical education research, I also worked as translator and interpreter for English speakers.*

*Therefore, after international forces leave Afghanistan, my life will be in danger so I once more kindly request you to save my life. Their withdrawing will be life threatening for all those women and girls who worked with international organizations and were social activists. I am one of those girls.*

*I am totally against the Taliban regime which is willing to kill so many Afghans especially children and women. They are against humanity and women rights for what you and young girls like me fought for years when US came to Afghanistan.*

*The US provided all the opportunities and I became an educated girl who works for education in Afghanistan now. I am known. The Taliban and my own family will come for me.*

*I believe that my expertise and experience make me a valuable*

addition to the West. Would appreciate if you would kindly give me an opportunity to explain my qualifications and experiences and all the other documents which prove my work and my life threats.

Every day we hear and see through news and social media that women are the most vulnerable group of the war that is ongoing in Afghanistan. The war has caused women to be in the worst possible situation. Women's rights are being violated and opportunities are being taken from us. Gender limitations are increasing and women are approaching to the highest stage of patriarchy.

In the last two decades, women had the opportunity to develop as much as men. But this achievement will be destroyed as the withdrawal of foreign soldiers is approved. Afghan civilians, especially women, are not only the victim of the physical torture that the opposition groups are performing but also suffering psychologically.

If Taliban comes, women will not have the right to walk alone on the streets, let alone working in the offices, social centers and organizations. This means that the very little freedom that women have achieved in all these years will be also taken away in a short period. People have lost their hope and are desperately searching for a way to get out of the country. Meanwhile, the government says that they are combating the severe attacks of Taliban and that they are always ready but they never say the truth about how weak they are performing against the opposite groups. Many believe that the government has no chance to defend against Taliban because they have already taken over most of the areas in the country.

I am telling you my story in the hope that it will help me

*and other girls in my position. Can you kindly save my life?  
I don't have a way of getting out.*

---

I was connected to this Afghan woman by an activist friend in the UK who has been helping the British government resettle the male translators who have worked with the military, along with their families.

I have since corresponded with her (let's call her Aisha), and now know that she has a degree in medical science, data analysis, and research, and has directed educational programs on and for Afghan women for several European NGOs, the UN, and for an American University in the United States.

If anyone qualifies for political or refugee status, it is this feminist. If anyone promises to be a productive and non-violent future citizen, it is someone just like Aisha.

She has five weeks left to live.

Afghans are fleeing into unfriendly, super-crowded, and misogynist neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Turkey, India, and Tajikistan.

**“Can you kindly please save my life?”**

They are paying smugglers to get them out—and face an unknown and difficult future in camps. It is probably preferable to remaining to face the Taliban.

It will be to our eternal shame, as Westerners, if we cannot help get her out. As I [pointed out](#) right here at 4W, as feminists, we lack our own air force and can claim no sovereign feminist space. Nevertheless, many governments might be—and should be—interested in helping her get out. Diplomats, government officials, legislators, can all be instrumental in this process.

Do you know a legislator who might support Aisha's fast tracked entry to the States?

Aisha only has two thousand dollars in savings which may or may not get her to the border. Please contact me through 4W (4w.editor@gmail.com) and I will forward your words, ideas, and contact information to her.

First published in