**Country Conditions Report: Afghanistan**

|  |
| --- |
| **TABLE OF CONTENTS** |
| Reports of the U.S. State Department | 1 |
| Reports and Statements of the United Nations | 6 |
| Reports and Statements of Other Human Rights Organizations | 15 |
| Media Reports on Women Police Officers in Afghanistan | 18 |
| Media Reports on Women in Public Life in Afghanistan | 25 |
| Media Reports on the Erosion of Rights for Women in Afghanistan | 28 |
| Media Reports on Intermarriage in Afghanistan | 29 |

**REPORTS OF THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT**

**Exhibit 15: U.S. State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Afghanistan 2012 Human Rights Report*, available at**<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2012&dlid=204393#wrapper>

*This report discusses Afghanistan’s inability to substantially curb violations of human rights and women’s rights, including the inability of the government of Afghanistan to effectively police such conduct. In particular, the report discusses the use of judicial and extra-judicial systems to prosecute, torture and convict women for so-called “moral” offenses, including “running away” and refusing to enter into a forced marriage. The report confirms that women who work or operate in the public sphere, including female police officers, are threatened, intimidated, harassed and targeted for assassination on account of their role. The report further explains that women without proper male guardianship in Afghanistan cannot live or work independently.*

* “The most significant human rights problems were credible reports of torture and abuse of detainees by Afghan security forces; widespread violence, including armed insurgent groups’ killings of persons affiliated with the government and indiscriminate attacks on civilians; pervasive official corruption; and endemic violence and societal discrimination against women and girls.” (p. 1)
* “ ‘Zina,’ the term for adultery and other illicit sexual relations, is a criminal act under the penal code. Police and legal officials often charged women with intent to commit zina to justify their arrest and incarceration for social offenses such as running away from home, defying family choice of a spouse, fleeing domestic violence or rape, or eloping. Police often detained women for zina at the request of family members. There were reports of cases in which judges converted rape cases into zina cases even when the police and prosecutor found the case to be rape.

“Authorities imprisoned some women for reporting crimes perpetrated against them and some as proxies serving as substitutes for their husbands or male relatives convicted of crimes.” (pp. 10-11)

* “Because the formal legal system often was not present in rural areas, local elders and shuras (consultative gatherings, usually of men selected by the community) were the primary means of settling both criminal matters and civil disputes; they also levied unsanctioned punishments. Some estimates suggested that 80 percent of all disputes were resolved by shuras. In many cases the shuras did not respect the constitutional rights of--and sometimes violated the rights of--women and minorities.” (p. 13)
* “Although more than 99 percent of the population was Muslim, the AIHRC reported that on several occasions, marriages between Sunnis and Shias or among Syed and non-Syed Shias were annulled as ‘haram,’ or against Islam.” (p. 15)
* “Women active in public life continued to face levels of threats and violence and were the targets of attacks by the Taliban and other insurgent groups. Most female MPs reportedly experienced some kind of threat or intimidation; many believed that the state could not or would not protect them.” (p. 28)
* “The AIHRC, justice implementers, and civil society made efforts to increase awareness of the [2009 Elimination of Violence Against Women] law. However, there was limited political will to implement the law, and a lack of its successful and proper enforcement continued.

“According to a survey by The Asia Foundation, less than one in five respondents said that an organization, institution, or authority existed in their area where women can go to have their problems resolved, while more than three-quarters said that there was no such organization in their area.” (p. 33)

* “Women who could not be reunited with their families were compelled to remain in shelters indefinitely due to the fact that ‘unaccompanied’ women are not commonly accepted in society. The difficulty of finding durable solutions for women compelled to stay in shelters was compounded by societal attitudes toward shelters, the belief that ‘running away from home’ is a serious violation of social mores, and the ongoing victimization of women who were raped but perceived by society as adulterers.

“Women in need of shelter who could not find a place often ended up in prison, either due to a lack of shelter alternatives, for their own protection, or based on local interpretation of ‘running away’ as a moral crime. According to a March Human Rights Watch report, up to 70 percent of the approximately 700 female prisoners in the country had been imprisoned for the act. The report asserted that these women were nearly always fleeing forced marriage or domestic violence.” (pp. 35-36)

* “Women who took on public roles that challenged gender stereotypes (such as female lawmakers, political leaders, NGO leaders, police officers, and news broadcasters) continued to be intimidated by conservative elements or received death threats to their or their families’ lives.” (p. 38)
* “Female members of the ANP reported harassment by their male counterparts, and there were reports of intimidation and discrimination of female members of the ANP and their families in their communities.” (p. 38)
* “A woman’s limited access to money and other resources to pay fines (or bribes) and the social requirement for women to have a male guardian affected women’s access to and participation in the judicial system. Local practices were discriminatory against women in some areas, particularly in parts of the country where courts were not functional or knowledge of the law was minimal. Judges in some remote districts acknowledged wide influence by tribal authorities in preempting cases from the formal justice system. In the informal system, elders relied on interpretations of Sharia and tribal customs, which generally discriminated against women.” (pp. 38-39)
* “Societal discrimination against Shia Hazaras continued along class, race, and religious lines in the form of extortion of money through illegal taxation, forced recruitment and forced labor, physical abuse, and detention.” (p. 45)

**Exhibit 16: U.S. State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Afghanistan 2011 Human Rights Report*, available at**<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2011humanrightsreport/index.htm?dlid=186457#wrapper>

*This report discusses Afghanistan’s inability to substantially curb violations of human rights and women’s rights, including the inability of the government of Afghanistan to effectively police such conduct. This reports specifically notes that women who challenge traditional general roles frequently receive “night letters” intended to threaten and intimidate them and that violence against women working in the public sphere, including assassination, is on the rise.*

* “Women who took on public roles that challenged gender stereotypes (such as female lawmakers, NGO leaders, and news broadcasters) received ‘night letters’ most often sent by conservative elements, political powerbrokers, or insurgents to intimidate them and their families. NGOs reported increasing violence against women working in the public and nonprofit sectors, including killings.” (p. 37)

**Exhibit 17: U.S. State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Afghanistan 2010 Human Rights Report*, available at** <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/sca/154477.htm>

*This report discusses Afghanistan’s inability to substantially curb violations of human rights and women’s rights, including the inability of the government of Afghanistan to effectively police such conduct. This report specifically notes that women are frequently the targets of violence, including assault and murder, and that such violence may come from components of the woman’s own family. It also notes that Afghanistan does not and cannot provide safe protection to women who are targeted and that widows, in particular, are at risk because they can be forced to marry a member of their deceased husband’s family and have their property seized.*

* “On July 18, Taliban leader Mullah Omar issued new rules of engagement, calling on Taliban commanders to capture or kill civilians working for foreign forces or the government.” (p. 18)
* “Many elements of society tolerated and practiced violence against women. Killing and assault against women commonly involved family members as suspects. Women widely reported that they were victims of violence, especially sexual violence. The wide range of violence against women included honor killings, the exchange of women for dispute resolution, trafficking and abduction, early and forced marriages, and domestic violence.” (p. 38)
* “The misapprehension that safe houses were a safe haven for immoral women forced them to operate nearly clandestinely and in a precarious security situation. . . . During the year Emrooz TV broadcast programs claiming that shelters were brothels, which civil society activists and women’s rights groups argued to be baseless accusations. During the year Nasto Naderi, a television journalist, produced a series of comments accusing shelters of carrying out activities violating Islamic law. He did not provide proof of these claims.” (p. 40)
* “Religious organizations in some provinces reinforced the social unacceptability of women travelling or even leaving home without a male family member or other approved escort. One religious leader said that travel without a ‘mahram,’ or unmarriageable relative, raised ‘questions about a woman’s piety.’ The Ulema Council for the Western Region issued a declaration that women traveling a distance of greater than 54 miles from home must be accompanied by a chaperone and forbidding female employees of foreign organizations from working alone in a room with a foreign man.” (p. 40)
* “Extended family violence was reportedly widespread. For example, on March 31, the former Kunar director of women’s affairs and her husband were sentenced to death following a public trial for the January 21 murder of their daughter-in-law. Their son--the victim’s husband--was also convicted and sentenced to two years in prison. Doctors who evaluated the body testified that the daughter-in-law was beaten and tortured.” (p. 41)
* “According to HRW and UN Women, more than 70 percent of marriages were forced, and despite laws banning the practice, a majority of brides were younger than the legal marriage age of 16 (or 15 with a guardian and a court’s approval).” (p. 41)
* “Since widows were perceived as their in-laws’ property, they could be forced to marry a brother-in-law, who might already have a wife; the late husband’s family seized any property he left.” (p. 42)

**Exhibit 18: U.S. State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Afghanistan 2009 Human Rights Report*, available at** <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/sca/136084.htm>

*This report discusses Afghanistan’s inability to substantially curb violations of human rights and women’s rights, including the inability of the government of Afghanistan to effectively police such conduct. It specifically describes women who operate in the public sphere who were threatened and then assassinated by the Taliban, and the government of Afghanistan’s inability and unwillingness to prevent such conduct or hold anyone accountable for such actions.*

* “On April 12, Sitara Achakzai, an outspoken human rights defender and local councilor in Kandahar, was killed; the Taliban claimed responsibility, but those close to her believe the killing may not have been related to the insurgency and instead could have been motivated by other personal or political factors. She had received threats for weeks before her death and had informed government officials of the risk she faced. By year’s end no arrests had been made for her killing.”

**Exhibit 19: U.S. State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Afghanistan 2008 Human Rights Report*, available at**<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/sca/119131.htm>

*This report discusses Afghanistan’s inability to substantially curb violations of human rights and women’s rights, including the inability of the government of Afghanistan to effectively police such conduct. It specifically addresses commonplace honor killings and the complicity of Afghan governmental institutions in enabling families to utilize extra-judicial punishments, including torture and death. It also speaks of the failure of shelters to provide safe haven to women in Afghanistan and the surge in assassinations of and assassination attempts against women in public life.*

* “The AIHRC documented a total of 76 honor killings throughout the year; however, the unreported number was believed to be much higher. In September, according to a local NGO, an 18 year-old woman in Kapisa Province was killed by her brother because she had run away from a forced marriage. Reportedly, after the woman ran away to a Kabul women’s shelter the Governor of Kapisa intervened in the case, sheltered her, and forced the woman’s mother to return her to Kapisa, resulting in her death.”
* “Women active in public life faced disproportionate levels of threats and violence. Supported by official government policy, women’s political participation gained some acceptance, even as conservative elements and insurgents resisted the trend.”
* “Many female MPs reported death threats. Women were also the targets of Taliban and insurgent attacks.”
* “As in the past, insurgents issued night letters threatening women working for the government, local NGOs, and foreign organizations. Women who received threats were often forced to move constantly to evade those harassing them.”

**Exhibit 20: U.S. State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Afghanistan 2007 Human Rights Report*, available at** <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100611.htm>

*This report discusses Afghanistan’s inability to substantially curb violations of human rights and women’s rights, including the inability of the government of Afghanistan to effectively police such conduct. It specifically addresses the assassination of female public officials and the lack of prosecution for crimes committed against women.*

* “Additionally, directors of the provincial offices of the Department of Women’s Affairs in Kandahar, Helmand, Farah, Uruzgan, Wardak, and Nuristan received threats of physical abuse.”
* “Authorities rarely prosecuted abusers and seldom investigated complaints of violent attacks, rape, murders, or suicides of women. If cases came to court, the accused were often exonerated or punished lightly.”
* “Several female MPs reported death threats. MP Samia Sadat survived assassination attempts against her in May and in February 2006. Women were also the targets of Taliban and insurgent attacks. In September 2006 unknown assailants assassinated Safia Ama Jan, the director of the Kandahar Department for Women’s Affairs. In October 2006 gunmen killed the daughter of MP Shakila Hashemi at her home in an attack believed to have been intended for the MP herself. Several provincial employees of MOWA continued to report threats. In November 2006 gunmen ambushed the vehicle of Kandahar provincial councilwoman Zargohna Kakar, killing her husband. Investigations into these cases continued at year’s end.”

**REPORTS AND STATEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Exhibit 21: UNHCR, UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Afghanistan (2013), available at** <http://www.refworld.org/docid/51ffdca34.html> (citations omitted).

*This report outlines the humanitarian conditions in Afghanistan, in particular cataloging the widespread violence against women and Taliban strategy for targeting their violent acts at civilians. The report specifically notes that women who contravene the Taliban’s interpretation of Islamic principles, norms and values (including women who work in the public sphere, such as for the Ministry of Interior, and are associated with international organizations and Western governments) are targets of Taliban, and other anti-government elements, violence and assassination, who use “night letters” to threaten and perpetrate violence. The report further explains that independent women in Afghanistan cannot survive on their own, separated from male family members. The report suggests that impending withdrawal of Western troops will result in a rollback of any protections achieved for women, particularly women who work in the public sphere.*

* “People fleeing Afghanistan may be at risk of persecution for reasons that are related to the ongoing armed conflict in Afghanistan, or on the basis of serious human rights violations that are not directly related to the conflict, or a combination of the two. UNHCR considers that in relation to individuals with the following profiles a particularly careful examination of possible risks is required:

(i) Individuals associated with, or perceived as supportive of, the Government and the international community, including the international military forces (IMF);

 . . .

(v) Members of minority religious groups, and persons perceived as contravening Sharia law;

(vi) Individuals perceived as contravening the Taliban’s interpretation of Islamic principles, norms and values;

(vii) Women;

(viii) Children;

. . .

(xi) Members of (minority) ethnic groups;

(xii) Individuals involved in blood feuds; and

 . . . .” (p. 4)

* “UNHCR considers that areas of Afghanistan that are affected by active conflict as part of the ongoing struggle for control between pro-government forces and AGEs, as well as areas of Afghanistan that are under the effective control of AGEs should be regarded as areas affected by events seriously disturbing public order. Consequently, UNHCR considers that individuals originating from such areas may be in need of international protection under the terms of Article I(2) of the 1969 OAU Convention, on the grounds that they were compelled to leave their place of habitual residence owing to threats to their lives, freedom or security as a result of events seriously disturbing public order.” (pp. 6-7)
* “Whether an [internal flight or relocation alternative (IFA/IRA)] is ‘reasonable’ must be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking fully into account the security, human rights and humanitarian environment in the prospective area of relocation at the time of the decision. In particular, the poor living conditions and precarious human rights situation of Afghans who are currently internally displaced in Afghanistan are relevant considerations that need to be taken into account in assessing the reasonableness of a proposed internal flight or relocation alternative. UNHCR considers that internal flight or relocation may be a reasonable alternative only where the individual can expect to benefit from meaningful support of his or her own (extended) family, community or tribe in the area of prospective relocation. The only exception to this requirement of external support are single able-bodied men and married couples of working age without identified vulnerabilities, who may in certain circumstances be able to subsist without family and community support in urban and semi-urban areas that have the necessary infrastructure and livelihood opportunities to meet the basic necessities of life and are under effective government control. Given the breakdown in the traditional social fabric of society caused by decades of war, mass refugee flows and internal displacement, a case-by-case analysis will, nevertheless, be necessary.” (pp. 8-9)
* “The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reports that Afghans in rural communities perceive [Anti-Government Elements] AGEs to be exercising *de facto* control over areas in many regions of Afghanistan; in some areas, such AGE control of territory was reported to have increased in the course of 2012. Afghan communities remark that in many districts the [Afghan National Security Forces] ANSF presence focuses primarily on protecting district centres. This allows AGEs to assume effective control of communities in other areas of the district, or to harass and intimidate local residents into supporting them. UNAMA noted a prevalence of human rights abuses in areas with limited ANSF presence controlled or partially controlled by AGEs.” (p. 10)
* “In the southern, southeast and eastern regions of Afghanistan, entire districts and in some cases, almost entire provinces are, to varying extents, controlled by Anti-Government Elements.” (p. 10, footnote 19)
* AGE attacks have shown a significant increase in targeted killings of local civilian leaders and a general campaign of intimidation aimed at controlling communities in rural areas. . . . Similarly, while AGEs continue to carry out high-profile attacks in Kabul, the violence is not limited to Kabul or more generally to urban centres; the Afghanistan Analysts Network notes that ‘much, and often extremely violent, insurgent activity is going on in the rural areas with relatively little coverage.’ UNAMA observes furthermore that AGEs appear to be focusing their efforts on holding ground in areas where government presence is minimal, which in turn has a significant impact on the protection of human rights of the affected communities.” (pp. 13-14)
* “In its announcement of the start of its 2012 spring offensive, the Taliban explicitly listed among its targets civilians such as members of the National Assembly and the HPC, and officials from the Ministries of Defence, Intelligence and Interior. As a result, UNAMA observed a shift in 2012 in the nature of the conflict-related violence, with fewer ground engagements between AGEs and progovernment forces, but significantly more targeted killings of civilians by AGEs. Civilian casualties resulting from targeted attacks increased by 108 per cent in 2012 compared to 2011, with UNAMA documenting the death of 698 civilians and the wounding of 379 others in incidents of (attempted) targeted killings.As in 2012, the Taliban announcement of its 2013 spring offensive warned that civilians associated with President Karzai’s government or its international allies would be at risk of attack.The upward trend in the number of civilian casualties as a result of targeted attacks continued in 2013, with UNAMA reporting a further 29 per cent increase in civilian casualties as a result of such attacks in the first six months of 2013 compared to the same period in 2012.” (pp. 15-16)
* “UNAMA has furthermore noted that community perceptions of insecurity, weak governance and the absence of civilian protection have a direct impact on the enjoyment of human rights, since such perceptions influence the extent to which people feel secure to exercise their rights to free movement, political participation, education and healthcare. In this regard, the tendency identified by UNAMA of AGEs refocusing their efforts on holding ground in areas where government presence is minimal, and the attendant deterioration in communities’ perception of security in these areas, has a significant impact on the protection of human rights for the affected communities.” (pp. 22-23)
* “AGEs are reported to systematically target civilians who are associated with, or who are perceived to be supporting the Afghan Government and the international community in Afghanistan, including the IMF and international humanitarian and development actors. . . . Among the primary targets of such attacks are national and local political leaders, government officials, teachers and other civil servants, off-duty police officers, tribal elders, religious leaders, women in the public sphere, civilians accused of spying for pro-government forces, human rights activists, humanitarian and development workers, construction workers, and persons supporting the peace process.” (p. 31)
* “Women’s human rights defenders are reportedly increasingly facing threats, intimidation and attacks, especially in areas undergoing security transition or under the control of the Taliban. In areas where the security transition has already been completed, women’s organizations have reportedly come under pressure to close down their activities.” (p. 36)
* “AGEs are reported to kill civilians deliberately to punish them for supporting the government, with the killings intended to serve as a warning to others. AGEs are also reported to use ‘night letters’ (*shab nameha*), threatening text messages and local radio broadcasts to warn civilians against supporting the Government.” (p. 36)
* “Although women have attained some leadership roles in Afghan Government and civil society since 2001, including as judges and members of parliament, women in the public sphere and those holding public office have been increasingly subjected to threats, intimidation and violent attacks. There are widespread reports of the targeting of women in the public sphere, including female parliamentarians, provincial council members, civil servants, journalists, lawyers, teachers, human rights activists and women working for international organizations. They have been targeted by AGEs, particularly in areas under their *de facto* control; local traditional and religious power-holders; community members; and in some instances by government authorities. Women who seek to engage in public life are often perceived as transgressing social norms and condemned as ‘immoral’ and targeted for intimidation, harassment, or violence by the Taliban and other AGEs. Women in the public sphere are reported to receive death threats by means of phone calls or night letters, warning them to stop working or risk being targeted. There are also numerous reports of women in the public sphere having been killed.

“According to human rights activists, in many instances law enforcement agencies failed to combat impunity for harassment and attacks against women in the public sphere.” (pp. 37-38)

* “[V]iolent attacks targeting the Shia population continue to occur; for example, a double attack in Kabul and Mazar-e Sharif in December 2011, apparently targeting Shias, killed at least 58 people. It should be noted that in Afghanistan ethnicity and religion are often inextricably linked, especially in the case of the Hazara ethnic group, which is predominantly Shia. As a result, it is not always possible to distinguish clearly between a risk on the ground of religion and a risk on the ground of ethnicity.” (p. 45)
* “[T]he situation of women and girls remains of serious concern on a number of fronts. The deterioration of the security situation in some parts of the country has undone some of the earlier progress in women’s human rights situation. Deep-rooted discrimination against women remains pervasive. Violence against women and girls remains widespread and is reported to be on the rise; impunity in relation to such violence is reportedly common. Women are said to continue to face serious challenges to the full enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights. Despite advances, poverty, illiteracy, and poor health care continue to affect women disproportionately.

“Observers have noted that the government’s commitment to the promotion and protection of women’s rights has at times been in doubt. The implementation of legislation to protect women’s rights remains slow. This includes in particular the implementation of the EVAW law. The law, promulgated in August 2009, criminalizes child marriage, forced marriage and 17 other acts of violence against women, including rape and domestic violence; it also specifies punishments for perpetrators. While some progress has been noted in the application of the EVAW law by prosecutors and primary courts, the vast majority of cases, including instances of serious crimes against women, are still being mediated by traditional dispute resolution mechanisms rather than prosecuted as required by the law. UNAMA reports that both the ANP and prosecutors’ offices continue to refer numerous cases, including serious crimes, to *jirgas* and *shuras* for advice or resolution, thereby undermining the implementation of the EVAW law and reinforcing harmful traditional practices. Decisions of these mechanisms place women and girls at risk of further victimization.” (pp. 48-51)

* “UNHCR notes that concerns have been expressed about the impact of the ongoing withdrawal of international troops on the situation of women in Afghanistan, and reported possible concessions on women’s rights in the context of peace negotiations with the Taliban and other AGEs. UNHCR considers that the evolving political and security situation in Afghanistan and the impact of such developments on the human rights situation of women merit close scrutiny in relation to all applications for international protection by Afghan women.” (p. 52)
* “Access to justice for women seeking to report violence is further hampered by the fact that women police officers constitute only just over one per cent of all police officers in the country. Women police officers are reportedly themselves at risk of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace, including rape by male colleagues.” (p. 53)
* “Despite Government efforts to promote gender equality, women continue to face pervasive social, political and economic discrimination due to persistent stereotypes and customary practices that marginalize them. Women who are perceived as transgressing social norms continue to face social stigma, general discrimination and risks to their safety. Such norms include requirements that restrict women’s freedom of movement, such as the requirement to be accompanied by a male relative chaperone when appearing in public. Women without male support and protection, including widows, are at particular risk. They generally lack the means of survival, given existing social norms imposing restrictions on women living alone, including limitations on their freedom of movement.” (pp. 55-56)
* “In light of traditional restrictions on women’s freedom of movement, coupled with low employment rates for women, UNHCR considers that an IFA/IRA is not reasonable for women who are single heads of household with no male protection, as they will not be able to lead a life without undue hardship, including in urban areas.” (p. 76)

**Exhibit 22: UNAMA & UNHCR, Afghanistan Annual Report of 2012: Protecting Civilians in Armed Conflict (2013),** <http://www.refworld.org/docid/512b26a92.html> (citations omitted).

*This report discusses the deliberate targeting of civilians by the Taliban and other anti-government elements and chronicles and uptick in violence against women public positions, including women associated with the Ministry of Interior and women police officers.*

* “Anti-Government Elements increasingly targeted civilians throughout the country and carried out attacks without regard for human life. UNAMA documented 6,131 civilian casualties (2,179 civilian deaths and 3,952 injuries) by Anti-Government Elements in 2012, an increase of nine percent compared to 2011. 81 percent of the total civilian casualties in 2012 were attributed to Anti-Government Elements.” (p. 1)
* “Particularly disturbing were targeted killings of women by Anti-Government Elements demonstrated by the killings of the head and deputy head of the Laghman Department of Women’s Affairs in August and December 2012.” (p. 4)
* “*My mother, father, brother, and two sisters were shopping in Metarlam city and had parked the family’s private vehicle outside the Department of Women’s Affairs’ compound due to security concerns. After buying sandals for my small sister they returned to the car. A bomb detonated against the vehicle killing my mother and wounding my father and my two sisters. My mother used to receive warnings from the Taliban and family members of the victims she assisted.*

-- Daughter of the Head of the Department of Women’s Affairs, killed in Mehterlam, Laghman province, on 13 July 2012.” (p. 22)

* “Within the 1,077 civilian casualties from overall targeted killings, the deliberate targeting of Government employees increased by almost 700 percent. In 2012, UNAMA documented 47 separate incidents of targeted killings of civilian Government workers which killed 107 civilians and injured 148. In 2011, UNAMA documented 23 of the same type of targeted killing incidents which killed 23 and injured 11 civilians.” (p. 22)

**Exhibit 23: UNAMA, Still a Long Way to Go: Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women [EVAW] in Afghanistan (2012),** <http://unama.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Qy9mDiEa5Rw%3D&ta> (citations omitted).

*This report chronicles commonplace persecution of and widespread violence against women. It details substantial underreporting by women in larger part because government and judicial structures do not exist to prosecute torturers and abusers and the government does little to prevent violence against women or to protect them. The report explains that many women who are the targets of violent and forceful acts, including forced marriage, become themselves subjected to extrajudicial, tribal tribunals that convict, torture and kill them. The report catalogues the government’s inability to implement the law intended to prevent crimes against women.*

* “Although prosecutors and courts were increasingly applying [EVAW] in a growing number of reported incidents of violence against women, the overall use of the law remained low indicating there is still a long way to go before women and girls in Afghanistan are fully protected from violence through the law.

“Incidents of violence against women still remain largely under-reported due to cultural restraints, social norms and taboos, customary and religious beliefs, discrimination against women that leads to wider acceptance of violence against women, fear of social stigma and exclusion, and at times threat to life.” (p. 2)

* “The report also found that rather than following required legal procedures in all cases, the Afghan National Police and prosecutor’s offices continued to refer numerous cases including serious crimes to *jirgas* and *shuras* for advice or resolution which often undermined implementation of the EVAW law and reinforced harmful practices. Decisions of these mechanisms were observed to often be shaped by powerful men in local areas applying different procedures and making decisions based on a mix of tradition, varying interpretations of Islamic law and local power relations sometimes contrary to law and religious principles. As a result, vulnerable segments of society, especially women and children sometimes faced further victimization.” (p. 4)
* “The report noted patterns of reluctance by police to arrest perpetrators of violence against women connected to armed groups affiliated with Anti-Government Elements, or pro-Government militias, *Arbaki*, Afghan Local Police (ALP), influential persons from in or outside the Government or those who could pay bribes. UNAMA observed that ANP in some areas appeared to be powerless before perpetrators while in other areas ANP seemed to favour perpetrators due to alleged corruption and lack of impartiality in administering justice. This phenomenon combined with weak accountability mechanisms in the police and discriminatory attitudes towards women resulted in widespread impunity for perpetrators of violence against women across the country.” (p. 4)
* “In monitoring individual cases, UNAMA encountered numerous instances of girls and women who fled their homes to avoid forced marriage or domestic violence and who were arrested, usually charged and convicted with ‘intent to commit *zina,*’commonly referred to as a ‘moral crime.’ ‘Running away’ or ‘home escape’ is not a crime under Afghan law. No provision in the Penal Code addresses the issue and it is not a crime under Sharia law; however, law enforcement authorities often arrest and prosecute girls for this ‘moral crime.’

“The EVAW law offers no protection for the woman or girl who runs to escape these crimes of domestic violence and forced marriage. This situation is demonstrated by the large number of women detained in Afghan prisons for so-called ‘moral crimes.’ ”

 (p. 11)

* “Forced and underage marriages, which represent one of the most deep-rooted and negative harmful practices, also remained a prevalent form of violence against women and girls as reported to UNAMA. . . . [S]ources, including DoWA and the AIHRC, reported these practices as the most widespread violations.” (p. 24)
* “In a majority of rural areas, in particular in the south-east, south and eastern parts of the country traditional justice mechanisms (shuras and jirga) remain much more powerful than formally established courts, and serve as the cornerstone of dispute resolution and access to justice for the vast majority of people. In some remote Pashtun dominated areas, the society is governed by cultural norms that relegate women to a marginal role and do not consider them entitled to enjoy all their legal rights. UNAMA observed that the traditional moral code plays a predominant role in these areas, often overruling the principles of Sharia law. In these areas, the society and representatives of Afghan institutions appeared to be compelled to abide by these rules which, in some cases, were less protective of the rights of women than Sharia and Afghan laws. This situation contributed to a general lack of compliance with applicable laws by local institutions.” (pp. 24-25)
* “Prevailing insecurity, lack of or poor Government control, weak rule of law and the absence of functioning courts, have further contributed to some communities’ reliance on traditional justice mechanisms, which appeared to be increasingly governed by more conservative religious leaders with retrogressive attitudes towards women’s position in society. UNAMA observed this trend in provinces and some districts where control by Anti-Government Elements was growing, such as in Nuristan, Paktika, Paktiya, Ghazni, Khost, Zabul, Urezgan, Kunar, Parwan (Siagird, Shinwary and Kohi Safi districts) Logar, Maidan Wardek, and Farah. In some districts in these provinces, Taliban parallel courts, jirgas, and traditional mechanisms were the only authorities providing governance and rule of law.” (pp. 25-26)

**Exhibit 24: UNAMA, *Harmful Traditional Practices and Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women in Afghanistan*, (Dec. 2010), available at** <http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Publication/HTP%20REPORT_ENG.pdf>

*The report catalogues the nominal progress made in the implementation of the law to protect women from violent and forceful conduct directed at them. It details a failure of the law and the Afghan government to effectively defend the rights of widows, who are forced to marry members of their deceased-husband’s families.*

* “A 40-year-old widow from Ghazni province was physically assaulted by her deceased husband’s brother in December 2009, when she refused to marry him. Her injuries were grave, necessitating specialist treatment in Kabul. The Department of Women’s Affairs assisted her to report the case to the police, no action was taken.” (p. 27)
* “Forced marriage of widows stems in part from widows being considered the property of their in-laws, but is also often due to the desire to deny a widow her right to inheritance by marrying her to a relative and keeping any inheritance within the family. The woman concerned is thus forced into a marriage against her will, contrary to all national and international law, as well as Sharia law – where consent is a prerequisite for any marriage.

“Often, if a widow does not remarry into the same family she risks losing her children. According to the Afghan Civil Code, once children have reached a certain age (nine for girls, seven for boys) guardianship is with the father, or in case of death or divorce, with the family of the father. The lack of authority over her own future limits a woman’s choices. Widows in turn may marry off their daughters at an early age to prevent them from being mistreated by relatives of the deceased husband’s family.” (p. 27)

* “The case of Karima is representative of the problem of forced marriage of a widow, denial of inheritance rights and possible loss of children. Karima, a resident of Ghazni province, was a widow who was forced to marry her late husband’s brother or risk losing her five children. She told UNAMA HR that her husband had been ‘a very good and kind man’ and they had a happy marriage. She gave birth to four daughters and she was pregnant with a boy when her husband was killed during a military operation. Three months after his death, the in-laws visited and took away all her valuable household items, saying she had no right to them. Five years later, they forced her to marry one of her husband’s brothers, under threat of being separated from her five children; a delegation that included a mullah gave her an ultimatum.

“In February 2010, UNAMA HR investigated a case in Parwan province, where a 22-yearold widow was reportedly forcibly married to an 11 or 12-year-old mentally disabled brother of her late husband. Her in-laws wanted to keep her inheritance in the family. The widow met another man and expressed her will to marry him. She ran away from her in-law’s house to a local shelter. The in-laws approached the courts and local authorities to force the widow’s return. With intervention from the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, the case was finally resolved in favour of the widow, who married the man of her choice after the court declared her marriage to the brother in-law void.” (p. 29)

**Exhibit 25: UNAMA, *Silence is Violence: End the Abuse of Women in Afghanistan*, (July 8, 2009), available at** <http://www.afghan-web.com/woman/afghanwomenabuse.pdf>

*This report catalogues the outright targeting by the Taliban, and other anti-government elements, of women who actively participate in the public sphere and discusses the assassination of, and attempted assassination of, women public officials and police officers.*

* “Women participating in public life face threats, harassment and attacks. In extreme cases, women have been killed for holding jobs that are seen to disrespect traditional practices or are considered ‘un-Islamic.’ For every Malalai Kakar and Sitara Achakzai, two prominent Afghan women who have been killed and made headline news, there are numerous women who receive threatening phone calls ordering them to stop working or threatening harm to their children. Women also receive threatening ‘night letters’, and are physically or verbally abused. As a result, women engage in self censorship, restrict their movements, or discontinue their work.” (pp. 1-2)
* “The current reality is that the lives of a large number of Afghan women are seriously compromised by violence. Women are denied their most fundamental human rights and risk further violence in the course of seeking justice for crimes perpetrated against them. Despite the hopes expressed nearly eight years ago, the rights and aspirations of Afghan women, and the men who support them, remain largely unfulfilled. The vast majority of Afghan women suffer a significant human rights deficit; for them, human rights are values, standards, and entitlements that exist only in theory and at times, not even on paper.” (p. 3)
* “Women have been targeted in a wide range of circumstances when outside the home; from appearing at a public event without a male relative or advocating in public for the respect of women’s rights, to being a provincial or a national elected official or as a civil servant. Countless media and other reports reveal that women participating in public life have been intimidated, threatened, attacked or even killed. Of five high-profile women interviewed in 2005 by a newspaper interested in covering stories of Afghan women who wanted to take a role in reconstructing their country, three have been murdered and one had to flee the country. A large number of women working for government institutions and female elected officials receive threats or are intimidated. Similarly, women working for international or local humanitarian and human rights organisations, or those who actively promote women’s rights, are targeted.” (p. 10)
* “Female parliamentarians, provincial council members, civil servants, journalists, women working for international organizations (including the United Nations), as well as those considered to be engaged in ‘immoral’ professions, have been targeted by antigovernment elements (AGEs), by local traditional and religious power-holders, by their own families and communities, and in some instances by government authorities. Women who transgress social norms have been threatened via phone calls, ‘night letters’, handbills posted in public places, in particular mosques; they have been followed in the street and verbally abused; their offices and homes have been attacked; rumors are spread to ruin their reputation, including during Friday prayers; and in some extreme cases women have been physically attacked, faced assassination attempts, or have been murdered. Targeted women have reported to UNAMA similar countless stories, regardless of their location or their ethnic background. In particular, women speak of receiving daily phone calls from unknown men, usually claiming to be Taliban, telling them to quit their jobs and return home or they would be killed or abducted. ‘Night letters’ are usually signed or stamped by the Taliban. Threats also target the relatives of those women working outside the home. A provincial council member also reported that the threats allegedly made by a Talib were also directed at her husband for allowing, and not disapproving of, her work. Accordingly, not only do women fear for their own safety, but also for the safety of their family.” (p. 11)

**REPORTS AND STATEMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS**

**Exhibit 26: Oxfam, *Women and the Afghan Police*, 173 Oxfam Briefing Paper (Sept. 10, 2013),** <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp-173-afghanistan-women-police-100913-en.pdf> (internal citations omitted)

*This report details the harassment and abuse, including sexual harassment and rape, of female police officers by their male colleagues. It specifically discusses the assassination and attempted assassination of women police officers and notes high ranking female polices officers have fled the Afghanistan for fear of death and/or torture.*

* “Sexual assault and harassment of female police officers by male colleagues is thought to be widespread in the ANP and deters many women from joining or remaining in the police force.

“A US National Public Radio report (March 2012) found disturbing allegations of systematic sexual coercion and even rape of female police officers by their male colleagues in Mazar-e-Sharif, the capital of Balkh Province, which has the third largest number of female police in the country. The report also claimed that in some cases sexual favours were demanded in exchange for promotion.

“Policies and directives developed to deal with these issues, such as the 2013 Directive on Sexual Harassment, are not being enforced at the local level, nor are they monitored and followed up effectively by the MoI. There appears to be little or no police awareness of the contents of these policies, and a lack of detailed knowledge of relevant laws such as the EVAW law and the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan.” (p. 21)

* “Women who have been harassed or victimised by male colleagues struggle to be heard. With the support of EUPOL, a helpline for Afghan policewomen was established in 2010 by the MoI within the GHRU in Kabul. However, interviews with policewomen showed that most are not aware of the helpline, while others regard it as ineffective.

“The GHRU is supposed to refer complaints made via the hotline to the relevant department and then follow up after 15 days. If the complaint involves injury or death, it should refer the case to CID for investigation. If there is an allegation of rape, then the case is referred to the Inspector General’s office, which may in turn refer it to CID.

“As these complaints cannot typically be made anonymously, many victims are intimidated into retracting their complaints, which leads investigations to be cancelled. Reliable data about the use of the hotline is also difficult to obtain. The GHRU is reported to have received 59 complaints by mid-2013. However, the unit lacks the capacity to oversee, monitor and follow-up on complaints effectively and struggles to obtain data from other departments.” (p. 22)

* “[M]any trained and capable policewomen are denied advancement and career opportunities within the ANP. A 2013 report found that women are frequently only promoted because of the influence of their relatives. When they are promoted, it is often only a ‘paper promotion’ with rank and salary increased, but no additional policing responsibilities. This fails to strengthen women’s position within the ANP structure and reinforces resentment from male counterparts.” (p. 23)
* “Many policewomen end up performing menial tasks or administrative work. With the exception of female body searches, women are rarely able to engage in core police functions such as investigating crimes or carrying out arrests. A Herat policewoman complained: ‘We’re not treated the same as the men. Even when we’re at the same rank as the men, it is us that the commander asks to make tea or do typing.’ “ (p. 24)
* “Many male police continue to believe women do not belong in the organisation, with others complaining that women arrive late to work, leave early and have lower literacy levels, yet receive an equivalent salary.” (p. 24)
* “There is significant opposition to women working outside the home across most of Afghanistan. Female police are regarded as having particularly low status, for a number of reasons, including mixing with men in the workplace, having to spend nights away from home, and sharing living and eating quarters with men.

“Allegations of prostitution within the ANP – as well as widespread rumours of abuse and harassment – contribute to this perception and make it harder to attract educated women into the police force.” (p. 28)

* “Policewomen, particularly those in leadership positions, face an additional threat of being targeted by insurgents for being members of the ANP. Lieutenant Colonel Malalai Kakar – the country’s top policewoman and one of the highest profile women in Afghanistan – was shot dead by the Taliban in Kandahar in 2008.

“Prominent women continue to be targeted: Hanifa Safi, the provincial Head of Women’s Affairs in Laghman Province was killed in July 2012 by a car bomb. Five months later, her successor Najia Sediqi was shot dead in a drive-by shooting. Others have received regular threats and intimidation. At least one high profile policewoman has fled the country.” (p. 28)

**Exhibit 27: Human Rights Watch, *The ‘Ten-Dollar Talib’ and Women’s Rights: Afghan Women and the Risks of Reintegration and Reconciliation* (2010), available at** <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2010/07/13/ten-dollar-talib-and-women-s-rights-0>

*This report details the lack of progress made in Afghanistan to support women’s rights and discusses the targeting and assassination of women in public life, including female police officers. The report explains that any nominal advances in women’s rights that the country has been able to accomplish under the guidance of Western governments and international human rights organizations since the fall of the Taliban are likely to be completely undone when Western forces leave in 2014.*

* “Reconciliation with the Taliban, a group synonymous with misogynous policies and the violent repression of women, raises serious concerns about the possible erosion of recently gained rights and freedoms. The prospect of deals with Hezbi- Islami (Gulbuddin), which is also known for its repressive attitudes towards women, involves similar concerns. Attempts by some promoting negotiations to redefine the insurgency as primarily ‘non-ideological,’ which ignores the experiences of women living in Taliban-controlled areas, have exacerbated these anxieties.” (p. 5)
* “Violent attacks by the Taliban against women, particularly those who work, are commonplace. For example, on April 13, 2010, an unidentified assailant shot a young aid worker, Hossai, in Kandahar, who died from her wounds. In the weeks preceding her death she had received threatening phone calls from someone saying he was with the Taliban, warning her to leave her job. Days later, another woman working with an international nongovernmental organization received a letter telling her that her name was on the same list, and she would be killed next unless she stopped working with ‘infidels.’” (p. 5)
* “In the last several years several prominent women in Afghan public life have been murdered, including provincial councilor and peace activist Sitara Achakzai, senior police commander Malalai Kakar, outspoken journalist Zakia Zaki, and women’s affairs director Safia Amajan. Their killers have not been brought to justice. This impunity emboldens those responsible and greatly adds to the risks and fears faced by activist women.” (p. 5)
* “Women who speak up for their rights, including female members of Parliament, regularly come under threat. These threats may be greater for those who articulate their fears about the political reemergence of the Taliban, whose leaders are accustomed to threatening and killing those who criticize or oppose them. Some fear that violence and threats directed against women are likely to increase should Taliban or other insurgent commanders hostile to women’s rights be brought into government. According to one leading women’s rights activist:

“I think it will mean loss of life for women, not just more pressure. Once the Taliban come to power they will find ways to assert their position and their ways of thinking on the people. For them, activists like us are the biggest problem, we shouldn’t be here-for them we are the problem.”

(p. 5-6)

* “Concerns that the outcome of reintegration and reconciliation might adversely affect women stem partly from a lack of confidence that the Afghan government will actively protect women’s rights. The Karzai government has a track record of sacrificing rights to appease hard line religious factions for political expediency, such as when President Karzai signed the discriminatory Shia Personal Status Law (which denied numerous rights of Shia women, including child custody and freedom of movement), in March 2009 and provided presidential pardons for two convicted gang rapists.

“The government has given little reassurance to women who are concerned about the risks of reintegration and reconciliation. In April 2010, the Minister of Economy, Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal, a prominent Hezb-i-Islami leader, reportedly told a gathering of women leaders discussing reconciliation that women would have to sacrifice their interests for the sake of peace.” (p. 6)

* “On March 6, 2010, unidentified gunmen attacked parliamentarian Fawzia Kufi, the second time she has escaped an assassination attempt. On April 5, 2010, Provincial Councilor Neda Pyani was seriously injured in a drive-by shooting in Pul-e Khumri, Baghlan province.

“The government has barely mustered a response even when very high-profile women are killed, attracting much media attention. It has never brought to justice the killers of several prominent women in public life, including Sitara Achakzai, Malalai Kakar, Zakia Zaki and Safia Amajan. The fact that these assassinations go unpunished increases the threat against women and compounds their fear. Although male politicians have also been attacked, every attack on a high-profile woman has a multiplier effect on other women in the same profession or region.

“Beyond physical attacks against women politicians, women face constant verbal abuse and threats from their male counterparts while working. Nuhaa N., an official involved in discussions about the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) law, described how male parliamentarians hurled insults at a woman parliamentarian who was defending the law. Nuhaa said,

“She was arguing passionately for EVAW law. Some MPs said she was un-Islamic and called her a prostitute. She retorted asking them whether they would call their mothers or sisters prostitutes, to which one of the MPs said, ‘They don’t work outside the house and are not prostitutes.’

(pp. 33-34)

**MEDIA REPORTS ON WOMEN POLICE OFFICERS IN AFGHANISTAN**

**Exhibit 28a: Heath Druzin, *Afghan Policewoman Killed in Pakistan, Fourth in a Year from One Province*, Stars & Stripes (February 11, 2014), available at** <http://www.stripes.com/news/afghan-policewoman-killed-in-pakistan-fourth-in-a-year-from-one-province-1.266924>

* “A female police officer from the volatile Afghan province of Helmand has been abducted and killed in Pakistan, her son said. She is the fourth policewoman from the province to die in the past year.”
* “Mohammad said in a telephone interview that he and his mother were taken from his sister’s home by armed men, blindfolded and bound before being driven away.

“ ‘They told me they were going to kill my mother,’ he said. “ ‘After a while, I heard the shooting and the car driving away. Once everything was quiet, I started pulling off my blindfold with my knees and I saw my mother dead.’ ”

* “Helmand has become the most dangerous province for women to serve in the police, with gunmen killing Helmand’s senior policewoman in September as she drove to work, just three months after her predecessor died in a similar attack. Another policewoman was also shot dead on her way to work in July.”
* “Rabia’s abduction from her daughter’s home in neighboring Pakistan suggests the killers were tipped off as to her whereabouts, adding a chilling twist to the assassination campaign against Afghan policewomen, who also face other risks.”
* “Saturday’s killing appears to be part of a wider campaign of assassinations against government employees and security officials as well as others seen as supportive of the central government.”

**Exhibit 28: Alissa J. Rubin, *Afghan Policewomen Say Sexual Harassment is Rife*, New York Times (Sept. 16, 2013), available at** <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/17/world/asia/afghan-policewomen-report-high-levels-of-sexual-harassment.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&>

* “An unpublished United Nations report on female police officers in Afghanistan found accounts of pervasive sexual violence and harassment by their male colleagues.”
* “The report, which the United Nations has circulated only among senior Afghan officials at the Interior Ministry, found that about 90 percent of the policewomen interviewed described sexual harassment and sexual violence as a serious problem, and that about 70 percent of the policewomen said that they had personally experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence themselves, according to people who saw the report or had it described to them.

“While a much smaller fraction reported either being raped or otherwise sexually assaulted, the overall picture was of a police force in which women were constantly at risk.”

* “Women’s rights advocates said that because Afghan policewomen were afraid of being penalized for revealing the problem, it was extremely difficult to get them to talk about abuse. That is all the more true if the person committing the sexual abuse is their commander or one of his close friends on the police force.

“The policewomen interviewed by The Times said they feared being fired or demoted, or being sent to work in a job that was far away from their home if they complained.”

* “A further disincentive to talking publicly about sexual abuse or coercion is that many Afghans already believe female police officers have loose morals simply because they are willing to work in public with men who are not relatives. If a woman admits that she is under pressure to have sex, conservative relatives might force her to quit — or even kill her to expiate the perceived dishonor to the family.”
* “A policewoman from eastern Afghanistan who spoke on condition of anonymity said she was the only female of more than 20 people working at her checkpoint. ‘I have asked to move, the men are not good there,’ she said.

“ ‘They were making bad cheap jokes every time I came in, and one man was leering at me every day saying, ‘Talk to me, be with me.’ What should I do?’ she said.”

**Exhibit 29: Emma Graham-Harrison, *Top Afghan Policewoman Killed Months after Predecessor’s Assassination*, The Guardian (Sept. 16, 2013), available at** <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/16/afghanistan-policewoman-nigara-assassinated-taliban>

* “Lieutenant Nigara was a well-respected officer whose work went far beyond the female body searches that fill the days of many policewomen. But today, Nigara, the top policewoman in Helmand province, died from her wounds after being shot twice on her way to work, just three months after her predecessor was assassinated in the same way by attackers who have never been identified.

“The death was the latest in a campaign of assassinations, intimidation, assaults and kidnappings of prominent women around [Afghanistan](http://www.theguardian.com/world/afghanistan) that has raised fears that the modest gains made by women in the last decade will be wiped out as western troops head home.”

* “[Nigara’s] death, at the hands of pistol-wielding men on motorbikes, was the third such killing in as many months. In July mystery assailants killed Islam Bibi, the most senior policewoman before Nigara, while she was on her way to work, and shot Sergeant Shah Bibi dead while she was shopping.”
* “Nigara’s attackers struck at a roundabout near her home on Sunday as she waited for a government bus to take her to work along with other police. Like other policewomen, she had no protection and her morning routine made her very vulnerable.”
* “Worsening violence across the country has bred greater dangers for women, with the numbers killed or injured in the first half of this year nearly two thirds higher than the same period of last year, according to a recent United Nations report on civilian casualties. Assassinations also rose by nearly a third.”
* “Taliban campaigns against both government officials and working women suggest female officers are especially vulnerable to insurgent attacks . . . .”

**Exhibit 30: Nesar Ahmad, *Afghan Militants Target Female Police Officers*, Central Asia Online, (Jul. 31, 2013), available at** <http://centralasiaonline.com/en_GB/articles/caii/features/pakistan/main/2013/07/31/feature-01>

* “Afghan authorities have condemned the July 21 slaying of policewoman Parveena and acknowledged the need for females on the police force.

Unidentified militants gunned down Parveena in the Landi Basool area of Momandara District, Nangarhar Province, when she and her family were heading to her father-in-law’s house, District Police Chief Esa Khan Zhwak said.

The 33-year-old mother of three was a junior police officer in the 5th police district of Jalalabad, Nangarhar Police spokesman Hazrat Hussain Mashraqiwal told Central Asia Online.”

**Exhibit 31: *Helmand’s Top Female Police Officer Shot Dead*, The Guardian (Jul. 4, 2013), available at** <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/04/helmand-female-police-officer-dead-islam-bibi>

* “Her brother threatened to kill her three times, but Islam Bibi loved her job as the top female police officer in Helmand so much that she defied both his demands she stay home and intimidation from Taliban, and kept putting on her uniform and going to work.”
* “The 37-year-old mother of three was an embodiment of how far a few brave women have come in conservative southern Afghanistan, but on Thursday her job apparently cost Bibi her life.”
* “Unidentified men gunned her down at the start of her morning commute, which she did without bodyguards or any other protection, riding pillion on the back of her son-in-law’s motorbike.”
* “Bibi worked in Lashkar Gah, heading a team of female officers in the criminal investigation department, a job that most of her family were implacably opposed to. ‘My brother, father and sisters were all against me. In fact my brother tried to kill me three times,’ she told the Sunday Telegraph earlier this year. ‘The government eventually had to take his pistol away.’ “
* “After years of recruiting drives, women still make up less than 2% of Helmand’s police force. The opposition of Bibi’s family is typical in southern Afghanistan. Many consider it shameful for women to work outside the home, where they may meet men from outside their family.”
* “The Taliban has also run a campaign of intimidation and assassination against both working women and government officials, making female officials particularly vulnerable.”
* “In 2008 the Taliban killed Malalai Kakar, the head of the department of crimes against women in nearby Kandahar city and at the time the most senior female police officer in the country. She was shot dead on her way to work, and left behind six children. Two years earlier the provincial head of women’s affairs for Kandahar, the Taliban’s birthplace, was killed. Last year two women who held the same post in eastern Laghman province were shot dead within six months.”
* “ ‘It has been increasingly dangerous over recent years to be a woman in public life in Afghanistan, and there has been a growing body count of women who have been brave enough to ignore the risks,’ said Heather Barr of Human Rights Watch.

“ ‘With the withdrawal of international forces and the deterioration we are seeing in women’s rights, there is every reason to fear that these dangers will become even worse in the years ahead, especially in provinces such as Helmand that remain deeply insecure.’

Human Rights Watch said this year that female police officers were often subject to sexual harassment and abuse from their colleagues, in part because they lacked even basic facilities. There are just a handful of female toilets in all the police stations of Afghanistan and women using male latrines are particularly vulnerable, the group said.”

**Exhibit 32: *Afghan Police Force Recruits Women to Fight Crime and Stigma*, United Nations Development Programme, (May 18, 2013), available at** <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/womenempowerment/successstories/afghan-women-join-police-force/>

* “Serious challenges remain, however, making the recruitment of women police officers a formidable task. ‘The Afghan National Police around the country faces a big problem with their security in general,’ says Marina Hamidzada, a gender specialist who works for the Law and Order Trust Fund. ‘For women police officers, the situation is worse. They cannot even patrol the streets wearing police uniforms,’ as it can—and has—proven to be a death sentence for them.”
* “The biggest challenge women police officers face is how they are viewed by their fellow officers, says Captain Daulatzia. ‘Although they are powerful as women, and they can run departments by themselves, there is a strong perception in the police force that women police officers are weak,’ she says. ‘This ignorance about the power and knowledge of women is something we are trying to change every day.’ ”

**Exhibit 33: U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class John Brown, *Female Afghan Police Make their Mark*, ISAF News List, (Feb. 4, 2013), available at** <http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/news/female-afghan-police-make-their-mark.html>

* “In many cases, due to insurgent activity, many female AUP/ABP choose not to wear their uniforms to work. This fear permeates throughout the lives of many female AUP/ABP. ‘We have found that some females in the ANSF are reluctant to even tell their own family members due to the fear of them or their families being targeted,’ said [Sgt. Stacy] Coffield.”

**Exhibit 34: Amie Ferris-Rotman, *Once a Symbol of New Afghanistan, Can Women Policewomen Survive?*, Reuters, (Dec. 19, 2012), available at** <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/19/us-afghanistan-police-women-idUSBRE8BI07T20121219>

* “ ‘We have largely failed in our campaign to create a female police force,’ said a senior Afghan security official who declined to be identified because of the sensitivity of the subject. Mullahs are against it, and the women are seen as not up to the job,’ he added referring to Muslim preachers.”
* “Friba sat in a city police station room decorated with posters of policemen clutching weapons to talk to Reuters. ‘I am the dragon and I can defend myself, but most of the girls are constantly harassed,’ she said. ‘Just yesterday my colleague put his hands on one of the girl’s breasts. She was embarrassed and giggled while he squeezed them. Then she turned to us and burst into tears.’ “
* “On the other side of Kabul, detective Lailoma, who also asked that her family name not be used, said several policewomen under her command had been raped by their male colleagues. Dyed russet hair poking out from her black hijab, part of the female ANP uniform, Lailoma wrung her hands as she complained about male colleagues: ‘They want it to be like the time of the Taliban. They tell us every day we are bad women and should not be allowed to work here.’ “
* “Male colleagues also taunt the women, she added, often preventing them from entering the kitchen, meaning they miss out on lunch. On several occasions, male colleagues interrupted Reuters interviews in what the policewomen said were attempts to intimidate them into silence.”
* “Rana, a 31-year-old, heavy-set policewoman with curly hair, said policewomen were expected to perform sexual favors: ‘We’re expected to do them to just stay in the force.’ The raping of policewomen by their male counterparts ‘definitely takes place’, said Colonel Sayed Omar Saboor, deputy director for gender and human rights at the Interior Ministry, which oversees the police.”
* “But many of the policewomen are wondering whether their force can survive. Lowering her voice, Friba whispered: ‘As soon as the foreigners leave, they’ll reduce our salaries. This will not happen to the men. Or perhaps they’ll kick us out entirely.’ ”

**Exhibit 35: Quil Lawrence, *For Aghan Policewomen, Sex Abuse is a Job Hazard*, All Things Considered, NPR News, (Mar. 8, 2012), available at** <http://www.npr.org/2012/03/08/148041305/for-afghan-policewomen-sex-abuse-is-a-job-hazard>

* “So why would female police officers in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif be ashamed to admit they wear the badge? ‘Except my very close family members, no one really knows that I am a police officer,’ said one woman at a NATO training session. The woman, who asked not to give her name, says she tells most of her family that she works with a foreign aid organization. That’s because the rumors about sexual abuse in Mazar-e-Sharif’s police force are so widespread that many of these women are ashamed to say they’re cops.”
* “ ‘Some women are being promoted only if they agree to give sexual favors,’ said one female officer.”
* “ ‘It’s a fact. Women in the police are being used for sex and as prostitutes,’ said Ann — not her real name — who is in her mid-30s. ‘It’s happened to me. Male cops ask for sex openly because they think women join the police just to work as prostitutes,’ she said.”
* “In Afghanistan, even in modern cities like Mazar-e-Sharif or Kabul, the capital, a wide array of supposedly ‘immoral’ conduct can get a woman called a prostitute. Anything from wearing the wrong clothes to sitting in the front seat of a car, or simply working outside the home can cause dangerous rumors. The law reflects that. With sexual assault, the woman is as often sent to jail as the man, the assumption being that any woman who puts herself in a situation to be vulnerable to rape must be immoral.
* “The women say abuse is widespread across Mazar-e-Sharif’s police force and that female officers are practically ‘trafficked’ when they are transferred from one district to another. Pay and promotion depend on sexual favors. Ann says she would never encourage a woman to join the police.”
* “Another woman, in her late-30s, arrived for an interview hiding her police uniform under her burqa. She says that after almost 10 years on the force, police officers stopped demanding sex from her but forced her to procure prostitutes. ‘Anywhere you ask for a job in the police force, they either ask you to give yourself or bring them girls,’ she said. She named several policewomen who act as madams for cops in the city.”
* “ ‘We’ve received many reports of abuse of Afghan women police in many parts of the country,’ said Georgette Gagnon, director of human rights for the U.N. mission in Afghanistan. ‘We are very concerned.’ ”
* “ ‘Violence against women in Afghanistan is at very high levels. One of the solutions put forward is for more females to join the police force to address this issue,’ [Gagnon] said. ‘It will be very difficult to take this seriously when females join and are themselves abused by other officers within the force.’ ”

**Exhibit 36: Lianne Gutcher, *Fighting is Cultural, Criminal for Afghan Policewomen*, USA Today, (Sept. 9, 2011), available at** <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/story/2011-09-19/Afghan-National-Police-force-women-Islam/50471816/1>

* “The women in this town where strict Islamic customs pervade all aspects of daily life call the policewomen ‘whores’ for working alongside Americans and men to whom they are not married, she says. The women get phone calls telling them they will be beheaded if they don’t quit the force.”
* “When 30 women here completed a 2½-month police training course, they were lauded by their U.S. mentors for the vital role they were going to play in bringing security to the nation. Then, almost immediately, more than 20 of the new recruits quit amid rumors that the local police chief was abusing some of the women sexually.”
* “Nabil Muradi, a mullah and tribal elder from Kabul province to the north, says it is wrong for women to join the security services.”
* “In Zabul’s provincial police headquarters, the lack of resources for policewomen and the extent of the community’s hostility toward them is clear. The nine women remaining on the provincial force said they have no uniforms and no weapons. They complain about name-calling and slurs for working alongside U.S. troops and men.”
* “Another policewoman, Bibi Anwara, says her husband divorced her when he learned she had joined the force. ‘When I told him I had quit, he remarried me. Now I do the job in secret,’ she said, proudly producing her police ID card, which she keeps tucked in her bra.”

**Exhibit 37: Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, *Let Women Protect Afghanistan*, The Daily Beast (Jul. 31, 2010), available at** <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2010/07/31/afghan-women-train-to-be-police-officers.html>

* “Despite a widely seen billboard and TV advertising campaign urging women to join the police, Afghan wives, daughters, and sisters who wish to sign up still face an uphill battle in winning their family’s permission.”
* “Many families in this conservative society are not keen to have women patrolling the streets or facing the security risks that accompany police work, particularly as Afghan National Police forces are being targeted by anti-government forces. This is especially true in the southern and eastern regions of the country, where the Taliban is most active and even male police officers face significant safety threats.”
* “Those women who do sign up for police training often wear their regular clothes when they leave their homes, only changing into their police uniforms once they reach the safety of their classroom. And nearly all of the students in the training course have hidden their new line of work from at least some of their male relatives.”

**Exhibit 38: Nushin Arbabzadah, *The Fighting Women of Afghanistan*, The Guardian, (Sept. 30, 2008), available at** <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/sep/30/afghanistan>

* “ ‘Killing Malalai Kakar was an unmanly thing to do,’ said a UN official in Kandahar after Afghanistan’s most famous policewoman was murdered this week.

“Ordinarily in Afghanistan, the shooting of a woman by two armed men on motorbikes would be considered naamardi - cowardly or, literally, unmanly. But Kakar was no ordinary woman: she was a senior police officer who had shot dead three men about to launch a suicide attack. When the press approached her at the time, she said that kind of thing happened every day in her line of work.

“Yesterday, the Taliban claimed responsibility for Kakar’s killing, saying she had been a long-term target. In a perverse nod to gender equality, in killing her, they acknowledged that an Afghan woman can be as deadly an enemy as any man.”

* “The Taliban killed Kakar because she worked for an Afghan government with the backing of international armed forces.”

**Exhibit 39: *Top Afghan Policewoman Shot Dead*, BBC News, (Sept. 28, 2008), available at** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7640263.stm>

* “Lt-Col Malalai Kakar, head of Kandahar’s department of crimes against women, was shot in her car as she was about to leave for work.”
* “Taleban rebels, who banned women from joining the police when they were in power, said they had carried out the shooting. ‘We killed Malalai Kakar,’ a Taleban spokesman told AFP news agency. ‘She was our target, and we successfully eliminated our target.’ “
* “The BBC’s Martin Patience in Kabul says Ms. Kakar was one of only a few hundred female police officers in Afghanistan and that she had previously received death threats.”
* “In June, another woman police officer was gunned down in Herat province in a killing believed to have been the first of its kind.”

**MEDIA REPORTS ON WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE IN AFGHANISTAN**

**Exhibit 40: Nesar Ahmad, *Taliban’s Attacks on Women Show Disregard for Democracy*, Central Asia Online, (Aug. 21, 2013), available at** <http://centralasiaonline.com/en_GB/articles/caii/features/pakistan/main/2013/08/21/feature-01>

* “As Afghanistan continues to move toward a self-sufficient, free and democratic society, Taliban militants are ramping up violence against women to frighten them away or otherwise remove them from the process.”
* “Recent violence against female parliamentarians and female law enforcers has spurred outcry from Afghan civil society members, activists and the UN, who have condemned the attacks.”
* “Unidentified militants August 7 attacked female Senator Rogul Khairzad, killing her 8-year-old daughter and driver in Muqur District, Ghazni Province. Ghazni Deputy Governor Mohammad Ali Ahmadi, called the ambush one of the ‘worst acts of the insurgents.’ “
* “In a similar incident, Taliban insurgents August 10 killed the son-in-law of Bakht Bibi, a female Afghan parliamentarian, and abducted her son in the Muqur District of Ghazni Province. Another man was killed in the attack.”
* “Unidentified militants that same day kidnapped Fariba Ahmad Kakar, a female Wolesi Jirga member, and her children while they were traveling to Kabul. Authorities have since freed the children and are still working to free Fariba.”
* “On July 4, the senior policewoman in southern Helmand Province, Lt. Islam Bibi, was shot dead on her way to work in Lashkar Gah. Afterward, another policewoman was murdered in Nangarhar Province en route to work.”
* “The Taliban want to frighten women from participating in the democratic process and from being active members of Afghan society, parliamentarians and women’s rights activists told Central Asia Online. ‘[Many] Afghan women are going outside the country ... for the sake of their security,’ Sahira Sharif, a member of parliament from Khost Province, said.”

**Exhibit 41: *Taliban Kidnaps Female Afghan Politician, Attacks Undermine Women’s Rights Campaign*, The Star, (Aug. 13, 2013), available at** <http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2013/08/13/taliban_kidnaps_female_afghan_politician_attacks_undermine_womens_rights_campaign.html>

* “Taliban fighters have kidnapped a female parliamentarian in Afghanistan’s central Ghazni province, a local police commander said on Tuesday, the latest in a string of high-profile, violent attacks on women.”
* “Successive, often deadly assaults on women working in state institutions are fueling concerns that hard-won women’s rights are eroding as international forces prepare to withdraw next year.”
* “Fariba Ahmadi Kakar was travelling by car with her three daughters, who were taken but later released, the police commander said. However, the kidnappers were demanding four Taliban prisoners in exchange for the parliamentarian.”
* “Survivors of attacks often say their only hope is to leave Afghanistan, still one of the worst places in the world to be born female. ‘I need to go outside the country for my treatment and for my security,’ says Muzhgan Masoomi, a former government worker who was stabbed 14 times last year.”
* “Kakar’s abduction follows the shooting last week of female senator Rooh Gul, police said. The senator and her husband survived, but their 8-year-old daughter was killed, along with the driver.”
* “Last month, the most senior policewoman in southern Helmand province, Lt. Islam Bibi, was short dead on her way to work in the provincial capital Laskar Gah. Bibi, touted as a rising star in the Afghan National Police, said she received death threats even from within her own family.”

**Exhibit 42: Golnar Motevalli, *Taliban Targeting Afghan Women and Government Workers, UN Report Find*, The Guardian, (Feb. 19, 2013), available at** <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/feb/19/taliban-targeting-women-un-report>

* “The number of civilian casualties in [Afghanistan](http://www.theguardian.com/world/afghanistan) has decreased for the first time in six years, said the UN, but targeted killings by insurgents – particularly of women, girls and government employees – increased dramatically.”
* “[T]he report showed a 20% increase in the number of women and girls killed or injured. Deliberate targeting by the Taliban and other insurgents also tripled in 2012, said the UN. Most were hit while in their homes or working in fields.”

**Exhibit 43: Alissa J. Rubin & Habib Zahori, *Afghan Women’s Affairs Aide Shot Months After Killing of Predecessor*, New York Times, (Dec. 10, 2012), available at** <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/11/world/asia/gunmen-assassinate-afghan-womens-affairs-official.html>

* “The acting head of women’s affairs in Laghman Province in eastern Afghanistan was shot to death in daylight on Monday as she was traveling to work.

“It was the second time in less than six months that the person holding that post has been assassinated. In the latest attack, two assailants on a motorcycle gunned down Najia Sediqi, the acting head, as she was getting into a rickshaw in Mehtar Lam, the provincial capital, according to Ahmad Gul Baidar, the head of administrative affairs for the women’s department.

“In July, Ms. Sediqi’s predecessor, Hanifa Safi, was killed when an improvised bomb exploded under her car — an attack attributed to the [Taliban](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/t/taliban/index.html?inline=nyt-org) but never fully investigated. Before that attack, Ms. Safi had been threatened because she had protected a young girl who married someone she loved rather than an older man to whom she had been promised.”

* “ ‘Targeting important government officials is part of the Taliban strategy to undermine the government’s and the foreign forces’ efforts in the country,’ [Zufenon] Safi said, referring to the international coalition.

“She said the Taliban singles out women in government posts because they know that killing them will garner more publicity.

* “ ‘There is only one reason behind killing women: to prevent women from working in the government,’ Ms. Safi added. ‘We should expect more similar assassinations in the upcoming weeks and months because they have threatened every female civil servant, including members of the provincial council and teachers.’ ”

**Exhibit 44: Orzala Ashraf Nemat, *Afghanistan Must Stop the Murder of its Female Leaders*, The Guardian, (Jul. 17, 2012), available at** <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jul/17/afghanistan-murder-female-leaders>

* “Afghanistan has lost another woman leader. Last week, Hanifa Safi – head of women’s affairs in Laghman province – had gone only a few metres from home when her car was blown up. Apparently a magnetic bomb was placed under the car, targeting Safi and her family. Her children, injured in the attack along with several other people, are now left orphaned as both Safi and her husband died in the attack.”
* “The targeting of Afghan women leaders in government positions is not a new phenomenon. Safia Amajan held the same position as Safi in Kandahar. Sitara Achakzai was a provincial council member. Malalai Kakar was provincial chief of female police in Kandahar. A number of women aid workers, whose names and identities are not recorded, have also been murdered.

“In the neighbouring Khyber Pakhtonkhwa province of Pakistan a young woman aid worker, Farida Afridi, was similarly targeted earlier this month for her work on women’s rights.”

* “Sadly, the Afghan government does almost nothing about such incidents apart from condemning them; there is rarely any serious effort to catch the perpetrators. In some cases, attempts are made to blame the killings on ‘personal disputes’ or ‘family hostility,’ or to imply some moral justification – in Safi’s case, that she ‘had been known locally for going out without her head covered.’ ”
* “However, it is very important to understand what role women like Safi play on the ground. Politically, she was the most senior female representative of the Afghan government in women’s affairs at a provincial and sub-national level.
* “In that position, she was involved in a continuous struggle to defend the rights of women who were targets of violent acts. This puts a woman like Safi in a critical and socially sensitive position because she is struggling against social norms or harmful traditional practices that clash with the Afghan constitution and laws.”

**MEDIA REPORTS ON EROSION OF RIGHTS FOR WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN**

**Exhibit 45: Heather Barr, *In Afghanistan, Women Betrayed*, New York Times, (Dec. 10, 2013), available at** <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/11/opinion/in-afghanistan-women-betrayed.html?emc=eta1>

* “[S]igns are everywhere that a rollback of women’s rights has begun in anticipation of next year’s deadline for the withdrawal of international combat forces. Opponents of women’s rights are already taking advantage of growing international fatigue with Afghanistan.

“On Monday, the United Nations issued a new report showing that while reported cases of violence against women went up by 28 percent in the last year, prosecutions increased by only 2 percent. A parliamentary debate last May on the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was derailed by conservatives calling for the abolition of a minimum marriage age for girls and arguing against making rape a crime. One of President Hamid Karzai’s new handpicked commissioners at the government’s previously well-respected Independent Human Rights Commission is an ex-member of the Taliban government who wasted no time after his appointment before calling for the repeal of the EVAW Law, which he said ‘violates Islam.’ ”

**Media Reports on Intermarriage in Afghanistan**

**Exhibit 46: Rod Nordland, *Afghan Couple Finally Together, but a Storybook Ending is Far From Ensured*, New York Times (Mar. 30, 2014), available at** [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/31/world/asia/afghan-couple-finally-together-but-a-storybook-ending-is-far-from-assured.html?action=click&module=Search&region=searchResults%230&version=&url=http%3A%&\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/31/world/asia/afghan-couple-finally-together-but-a-storybook-ending-is-far-from-assured.html?action=click&module=Search&region=searchResults%230&version=&url=http%3A%25&_r=0)

* “A court in Bamian, in central Afghanistan, had ordered Zakia returned to her family, but the Women’s Ministry intervened, convinced that the relatives would carry out an honor killing because they had opposed the couple’s plans to marry. Zakia is a member of the Tajik ethnic group, and Mohammad Ali is a Hazara. Ms. Kazimi accused the Tajik-dominated court in Bamian of interfering because the couple were from different ethnic groups; the court responded by ordering that Ms. Kazimi be dismissed from her position.”
* “Mr. Zaman now maintains that his daughter had already been legally married to his nephew, although the actual wedding ceremony and consummation of the marriage had not taken place. He pressed charges of bigamy after the elopement.

“The Bamian police chief, Khudayar Qudsi, said the police were seeking the couple as a result. ‘The issue is now serious since the girl got out of the shelter and eloped,’ he said.”

* “The case reflects a conflict between Shariah or Islamic law, customary practices in Afghanistan, and civil law. Though Zakia is legally an adult, and can legally marry under civil law, under Islamic practice here she cannot marry without her father’s consent.

“In addition, it is entirely possible that her father could have married her to his nephew without her actual presence, a common practice in Afghanistan. She denies agreeing to any such union, and insists it never took place.”

* “If the two are found, it is likely that both will be imprisoned while Afghanistan’s courts try to sort out the dispute. Some 75 percent of women in Afghan prisons are held on so-called social offenses, many of them for what is known as “attempted adultery,” a charge that can be brought against a man and woman for simply being in each other’s company if they are not close relatives. Rape of women in police custody is commonplace, according to women’s activists.”
* “Ms. Kazimi is worried about her own future because of her high profile in trying to save Zakia’s life. ‘I sacrificed everything because I thought it was what was right,’ she said. ‘I’ve lost my job. I won’t be able to work anywhere in Afghanistan now.’ ”

“ ‘I wouldn’t mind if I had the same fate as the women’s ministry directors in [Laghman](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/11/world/asia/gunmen-assassinate-afghan-womens-affairs-official.html) and [Kandahar](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/25/world/asia/25iht-afghan.2929845.html),’ she said, referring to three of her colleagues who were assassinated by insurgents. ‘But I am worried about my children.’ ”