

Afghan Women in Crisis:
Will Access to Social Media Guard Against Unethical Treatment?

With the recent withdrawal of U.S. troops and foreign aid out of Afghanistan, many Afghan women and girls are grappling with the prospect of losing hard-won freedoms and becoming once again subject to Taliban oppression which will dramatically change their everyday lives. The enormous expansion of rights for Afghan women over the last twenty years, since the beginning of the war in 2001, included vast educational opportunities, freedom of expression unrestricted by fundamentalist censorship, and community engagement. Although tremendous strides were made for Afghan women over the last two decades, these new rights have always existed in a fragile and delicately balanced infrastructure. The prospect of these rights now surviving after a return to Taliban rule seems conditional on keeping local Taliban rulers feeling calm and unchallenged by the societal advances for women. But already, we see the light of freedom for Afghan women being extinguished, and their rights crumbling away. As Taliban-power coalesces, women are being prohibited from pursuing secondary school education and venturing outside without wearing burqas, and worse, they are again being segregated from society. An argument can be made that these new restrictions pale by comparison to the oppression Afghan women faced prior to the 2001 invasion. However, human rights activists believe that these preliminary aggressions towards women will advance in seriousness very quickly. Indeed, even though the Taliban is under scrutiny by foreign governments hoping to ensure that women remain safe, there have already been reports of public beatings of women. One promising fact is that our world interrelationships have dramatically changed since 2001, especially

Philosopher *journal*

A National High School Ethics Magazine of Ideas

our global connection to one another. Social media, in particular, has contributed to a metaphorical “flattening” of earth, where we are all interconnected on the same plane, although located halfway across the globe from one another. Wielding such powerful connection tools, Afghan women will hopefully have the ability to advocate for their rights and gain traction and support from others all over the country.