



PRESS RELEASE

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LAUNCH OF A PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL FOR WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN BEFORE THE PERMANENT PEOPLES' TRIBUNAL

A coalition of Afghan civil society organizations is proud to announce the launch of a People's Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan before the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT), a groundbreaking initiative to address the impunity around gender persecution in Afghanistan. As Afghan women and girls continue to face systematic oppression at the hands of the Taliban, and while states around the world gradually normalize Taliban atrocities, Afghan civil society is taking action. By launching the People's Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan, Afghan civil society and women's rights groups are creating a pathway to hold the Taliban accountable for their crimes and demand justice, raise the alarm about normalization of Taliban's oppression of women and give women and girls their chance to be heard around the world.

Since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, Afghan women and girls have endured a significant rollback of their fundamental human rights. Banned from secondary and university education, forbidden from working in nearly all professions, and excluded from public life, they now face one of the most extreme forms of gender-based oppression in the world. Women and girls have been silenced and marginalised in their country and risk being forgotten by the world. Meanwhile, the slide towards diplomatic normalization with the Taliban de facto regime continues, with the most recent and unjustified recognition of the Taliban by the Russian Federation.

Four Afghan prosecutors, each with expertise in international criminal justice and gender-based violence, are currently preparing an indictment to be presented to the tribunal in early October. They are supported by a dedicated Evidence Team responsible for gathering documentation, as well as a prominent international expert team. The hearings will be presided over by an international panel of judges, whose composition will be decided by the Permanent People's Tribunal and announced in the coming weeks.

The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal, in collaboration with the Madrid Bar Association, will hold a public hearing in Madrid, Spain, beginning on October 8th, which will be live-streamed worldwide. The hearings will provide Afghan women and girls a platform to share their testimony, as well as include expert testimonies from civil society, jurists, and global human



rights specialists. The hearing will be followed by an initial statement from the judges on 10th October. We expect the panel of judges to issue their final verdict in the first half of December 2025.

While the Afghan civil society coalition supports all other accountability mechanisms on Afghanistan and particularly welcomes the International Criminal Court's July 2025 arrest warrants against senior Taliban leaders for the crime against humanity of gender persecution, it emphasizes that this step alone is insufficient. The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal process highlights the urgent need for broader and more sustained action to address justice and accountability in Afghanistan, and calls for a comprehensive, victim-centred, and holistic approach to transitional justice.

One of the prosecutors says:

"When crimes against humanity are taking place, the silence of other states is a crime. The People's Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan will make the world listen to Afghan women and girls."

This independent international tribunal will review evidence of gender persecution as a crime under international law, demonstrating how the severe oppression of Afghan women and girls defies both Islamic teachings and international obligations. This survivor-centred and people-led process will amplify women's voices, collect vital evidence, and demand accountability for perpetrators of gender persecution.

Rokhsar (pseudonym), an activist from Afghanistan said:

"We do not want mere sympathy from the international community. We want action, and this is the time for action."

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Background information:

About the Permanent People's Tribunal: The PPT is international opinion tribunal, which addresses cases of gross violations of human rights, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide. It is based in Rome and has held hearings all over the world. It is comprised of a network of internationally recognized experts. The PPT is based in Rome, Italy, and has held more than 50 sessions all over the world. It has previously held two sessions on Afghanistan, addressing the 1979 Soviet invasion, in Stockholm (1981) and Paris (1982).

The Afghan coalition comprises four organizations: Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO), Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DROPS), and Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+). In addition, since December 2024, the four organizations have held discussions and consultations with victims, survivors, Islamic scholars, international human rights lawyers, civil society organizations, and international criminal justice academics and experts, both inside and outside Afghanistan.

Chronology:

December 2024: Afghan coalition submitted a request to the Permanent People's Tribunal

January 2025: Permanent People's Tribunal accepted the request

July 2025: Announcement of the People's Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan

October 8-10 2025: Hearings will be held in Madrid, Spain

December 2025: Verdict will be issued.

Background on People's Tribunals: See Rawadari's paper, Avenues for Justice.