NWSA Statement in Solidarity with Afghan Women and Feminists

In recent days, we have watched with growing concern as the Taliban has taken control of Afghanistan. In the 1990s when the Taliban held power in Afghanistan, women and girls were forced out of public spaces, denied education and work opportunities, and were unable to leave their homes without male guardians accompanying them. Already, there are increasing reports of violence against communities captured by the Taliban, including sexual violence and war crimes. We know that women and children, feminist scholars and activists, LGBTQ+ people, ethnic and religious minorities, human rights defenders, and journalists are under immediate threat of violence. We express our solidarity with Afghan women’s rights and feminist activists and scholars, and human rights activists, many of whom are currently being targeted by the Taliban.

What is happening in Afghanistan is a humanitarian crisis, and according to Fawzia Koofi, an Afghan women’s rights activist, “Women in Afghanistan are the most at danger or most at-risk population of the country.” "A Perilous Moment for Afghan Women and Girls": If the US Doesn't Learn From the Past, Afghan Women and Girls Will Pay the Price

We condemn the violations of women’s rights and human rights currently taking place in Afghanistan. We also underscore the need for a critical feminist approach, grounded in transnational and intersectional feminist frameworks, in order to avoid Afghan women being used as a tool in the “war on terror.” By justifying the U.S.-led invasion and bombing of Afghanistan in 2001 in claiming that it was a liberation mission to save Afghan women from the Taliban, the Bush administration and others consolidated stereotypes of Afghan women, and Arab and Muslim women more broadly. We remain critical of an imperialist/colonialist stance, grounded in Orientalism, that would justify increased militarism and more war-making. And we acknowledge that the U.S. is complicit in what has happened in Afghanistan.

Recognizing the urgency for safe passage for those who must leave Afghanistan, we call on our government to streamline the paperwork process for those who need visas, including Special Immigrant Visas and P1 and P2 visas, to support and streamline the evacuation process, to increase refugee admissions caps, and to take all necessary steps to resettle Afghans who arrive in the U.S.

We support Afghan women’s rights and feminist activists and scholars, and all those working on behalf of social justice and human rights in Afghanistan. We pledge to listen to and follow the lead of Afghan women leaders. We add our voices to all those across the world condemning the militarized violence against women, children, LGTBQ+ communities, and others within Afghanistan.
Signed,

The NWSA Executive Committee

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