

RAOUL WALLENBERG INSTITUTE

OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

Conference Report

The Future of Human Rights in Afghanistan:

Between Rule and Agency

**Organised by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI) and
the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET)**

Lund/Online, November 14-16, 2024

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Conference Report

The Future of Human Rights in Afghanistan: Between Rule and Agency

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Executive Summary

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI) is currently implementing a human rights programme on Afghanistan (2024-2026). The overall objective of the programme is “to contribute to strengthened conditions for inclusive governance, peace, and respect for human rights and gender equality in Afghanistan”. In order to reach this objective, one particular result that the programme aims to achieve is increased scholarship and academic discourse on the human rights situation, including in relation to gender equality, in Afghanistan. The programme also collaborates closely with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett. The UNSR is hosted at RWI as a Visiting Professor and the programme aims to support the UNSR mandate and priorities (for more information see <https://rwi.lu.se/afghanistan-programme/>).

Aligned with these overarching goals, and in collaboration with the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) of Lund University, RWI organized a research conference in Lund and online from November 14–16, 20. The conference aimed to explore key human rights challenges in Afghanistan, encourage interdisciplinary dialogue, and provide a platform for Afghan scholars and experts to exchange ideas and network.

The event featured keynote speeches, panel discussions, and presentations by academics, civil society actors, and policymakers. Discussions covered themes such as accountability for human rights violations, freedom of expression, humanitarian aid, gender apartheid, education, and the intersection of political economy and human rights. The conference also examined the challenges facing Afghan civil society, the role of the diaspora in advocacy, and the struggles of marginalized groups, particularly the Hazara community.

A total of 63 participants attended in a hybrid format, representing diverse academic institutions, international organizations, and civil society groups. Women comprised 51% of the participants, ensuring a gender-balanced group.

This report summarizes the key discussions and findings of the thematic panels, highlighting critical issues raised and potential paths forward.

The report concludes with participant recommendations and suggested follow-up actions.

Annex 1: Conference Concept Note and Call for Applications

Annex 2: Conference Agenda

Conference Proceedings

Day 1: 14 November 2024

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Time: 09:00-09:30

Speakers: Peter Lundberg (Director, RWI) and Catarina Kinnvall (Director, SASNET)

Keynote Speech

Time: 09:30-10:30

Title: *The EU's Policy towards Afghanistan – What's Human Rights Got to Do with It?*

Speaker: Tomas Niklasson, EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan

Keynote Summary

The keynote addressed the European Union's (EU) strategy and challenges in engaging with Afghanistan under Taliban rule, with a particular focus on gender apartheid, human rights, and humanitarian priorities.

Human Rights and Gender Apartheid

- The EU has placed women's rights at the forefront of its approach, framing gender apartheid as a critical human rights violation that demands a strong response.
- Initiatives include:
 - €10 million in financial support allocated to women-led projects.
 - A "for women, by women" approach, ensuring that Afghan women are actively involved in designing and implementing aid programs while maintaining anonymity for their safety.
 - Advocacy for universal education, including financial support for teachers despite school closures.

EU Engagement and Challenges

- The EU does not recognize the Taliban as a legitimate government but continues to engage on key issues such as:
 - Safe passage for Afghans.
 - Humanitarian access.
 - Inclusive governance.

- These are not preconditions for dialogue—instead, the onus is placed on the Taliban to take the first steps, a strategy that risks stagnation. While development aid has been suspended due to a lack of legitimate partners, humanitarian assistance continues, albeit with significant financial and operational challenges.

Balancing Principles and Realism

- The EU pursues strategic patience, acknowledging both the worsening human rights situation and the Taliban's broken commitments.
- The keynote highlighted the importance of accountability mechanisms, such as CEDAW implementation and commissions of inquiry.
- Cooperation with Muslim-majority nations (e.g., Indonesia and Qatar) was identified as a crucial strategy for advancing education and human rights initiatives.

Conclusion

Human rights remain central to the EU's Afghanistan policy. The keynote underscored the need for clear, principled action while engaging pragmatically with both the Taliban and regional actors to sustain long-term change.



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Session 1: Accountability for Human Rights Violations in Afghanistan

Time: 11:00-12:00

Speakers:

- **Huma Saeed** (Independent Consultant/Country Advisor, MADRE) – *Presentation of RWI's Strategic Study on Accountability*
- **Benazir Matahar Latifi** (DEFAW) – *Human Rights Violations and Gender-Based Repression under Taliban Rule: A Call for Accountability*

Panel Summary

This panel examined accountability mechanisms, documentation efforts, and international justice frameworks for Afghanistan's human rights crisis. Discussions focused on:

- The importance of transitional justice mechanisms to address past and present violations.
- The role of international courts and investigative bodies in holding perpetrators accountable.
- Challenges in collecting and preserving evidence under Taliban rule.

Conclusion

The panel emphasized the need for continued documentation efforts, international cooperation, and advocacy to ensure that human rights violations do not go unpunished.

Day 1: 14 November 2024

Parallel Sessions:

Parallel Session 1: Humanitarian Aid and Human Rights in Afghanistan

Time: 13:00-14:30

Speakers:

- **Mohammad Mustafa Raheal** (University of Bath) – *Ethnic and Geographic Disparities in Humanitarian Aid Delivery under Taliban Rule*
- **Layma Murtaza** (International Development and Strategy Specialist) – *Navigating Sanctions: Private Sector Engagement and Humanitarian Impact*
- **Ahmad Faisal Sidiqi** (INSO) – *Analysing the Current Humanitarian Crisis: Food Insecurity, Healthcare Access, and Displacement*
- **Mohib Iqbal** (Independent Economist) – *Exploring the Complex Interplay between Humanitarian Aid, Sanctions, and the Afghan Economy*

Panel Summary

The session examined the challenges of humanitarian aid distribution, the impact of sanctions, and economic instability in Afghanistan.

Humanitarian Inequalities

- Aid delivery reinforces ethnic and geographical disparities, with pro-Taliban regions (e.g., Kandahar) receiving more resources, while marginalized areas (e.g., Ghor) are neglected.
- A rights-based, transparent approach is essential to rebuild trust and ensure equitable aid distribution.

Economic Sanctions & Crisis Impact

- Sanctions since 2021 have led to economic collapse, causing liquidity crises, hyperinflation, and worsening food insecurity.
- Women are disproportionately affected, facing higher unemployment and reduced access to aid.
- Targeted sanctions and private sector engagement could help mitigate harm while fostering resilience.

Healthcare & Food Insecurity

- Half the Afghan population requires humanitarian aid, with women and children most affected.

- Healthcare services are collapsing, exacerbating gender inequalities in maternal and child health.

Conclusion: The panel stressed the urgent need for a coordinated global response to address humanitarian disparities, stabilize the economy, and promote sustainable development.

Parallel Session 2: Media, Civil Society, and Human Rights in Afghanistan

Time: 13:00-14:30

Speakers:

- **Zahra Noory** (Media Professional) - *The Perilous Fight of Afghan Women Journalists*
- **Ahmad Jamshid Fardi** (Chair of the Afghanistan Human Rights Defenders Committee of Northern Afghanistan in Exile) - *Shrinking Civil Space under Taliban Rule: Analyzing the Repression of Civil Society Actors and Media Practitioners in Afghanistan*
- **Rokhsar Sadat** (LLM, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia) - *Examining the impact of the UN's stance on the escalation of Freedom of Expression's restrictions in post-Collapsed Afghanistan* (online)
- **Wahidullah Ghazikhail** (Director, Center for Studies and Research, Afghanistan) - *Civil Society, Media, and Freedom of Expression, focus on intersection media censorship and human rights* (online)

Panel Summary

1. The Perilous Fight of Afghan Women Journalists (Zahra Noory)

- **Pre-2021:** 248 TV channels, 438 radio stations, 91 newspapers.
- **Post-2021:** 68 TV channels, 211 radio stations, 13 newspapers, severe restrictions on female journalists.
- **Risks:** Censorship, violence (87% of women journalists faced gendered violence), surveillance, and forced job losses.

Recommendations: Secure reporting, digital literacy training, financial support, and asylum pathways.

2. Shrinking Civil Space under Taliban Rule (Ahmad Jamshid Fardi)

- Systematic repression of activists, media censorship, and government-controlled NGOs.
- Need for greater collaboration between diaspora and in-country activists.

- Proposed strategies: Underground education initiatives, joint advocacy campaigns, and diplomatic lobbying.

3. UN's Role in Protecting Freedom of Expression (Rokhsar Sadat)

- **Findings:** UN interventions have been largely ineffective in deterring Taliban media suppression.
- **Media control:** Self-censorship, journalist detentions, and increasing restrictions.

Conclusion: Without stronger action, Afghanistan risks becoming increasingly isolated, with fundamental rights severely curtailed.

Parallel Session 3: Rights of Displaced Persons, Migrants, and Refugees

Time: 14:30-15:45

Speakers:

- **Rona Karimi** (MA, Peace and Conflict, International Christian University, Japan) – *Barriers to Educational Advancement for Afghan Refugee Women: Insights from Afghan Women in Tajikistan*
- **Geety Sultani** (Advocacy and Information Coordinator, Norwegian Refugee Council, Afghanistan) – *Internally Displaced and Returnee Women's Access to Housing, Land, and Property Rights*

Panel Summary

The panel examined the challenges faced by Afghan refugee and displaced women in securing education, housing, and property rights. Speakers highlighted structural, cultural, and legal barriers, along with potential solutions for improving access and agency.

Access to Higher Education

- Afghan refugee women in Tajikistan face multiple challenges, including language barriers, financial dependence on remittances, and cultural norms prioritizing marriage over education.
- Many post-2001 educated Afghan women express a strong desire for continued education, but limited infrastructure and government resettlement priorities prevent long-term educational access.
- Recommendations include vocational training, psychological support systems, and employment pathways for women to help overcome these obstacles.

Housing, Land, and Property Rights

- Displaced and returnee women in Afghanistan face systemic barriers to securing housing and property rights due to gender norms, illiteracy, and complex legal frameworks.
- Women navigate a mix of Islamic, statutory, and customary laws, which vary based on regional and community norms.
- Social stigma, mobility restrictions, and lack of legal awareness further restrict women's ability to claim property rights, especially widows and displaced women.

Proposed Solutions

- Culturally sensitive approaches, leveraging Islamic principles and local community leaders to advocate for women's property rights.
- Legal aid programs and formalized rental agreements to provide displaced women with more secure housing options.
- Awareness campaigns to educate women on their rights and help them navigate legal frameworks.

Conclusion: The panel emphasized the need for stronger legal frameworks, targeted assistance, and community-based solutions to ensure greater educational and housing rights for Afghan women in exile and displacement.

Parallel Session 4: Human Rights of Women: Addressing Violence, Justice, and Protection

Time: 14:30-15:45

Speakers:

- **Hassan Rahnaward Ghulami**, (PhD Candidate, University of Bologna) – *Cultural Determinants and Lived Experiences of Domestic Violence Among Women in Afghanistan: A Case Study of Bamiyan*
- **Humaira Rasuli**, (RWI Research Fellow) – *Support to the Rights of VAW Survivors via Formal or Informal Justice Mechanisms (Online)*
- **Mitra Tanomand**, (RWI Research Fellow) – *Unveiling the Post-2021 Realities within Women's Protection Centres in Afghanistan: Navigating Challenges Amidst Socio-Political Shifts*

Panel Summary

The session focused on the severe challenges faced by Afghan women post-2021, including restricted access to protection, justice, and financial independence. It examined the impact of the Taliban's return on Women's Protection Centres (WPCs), cultural determinants of domestic violence, and the collapse of Afghanistan's legal justice system.

Women's Protection Centres & Accountability

- The return of the Taliban led to the closure of WPCs, leaving survivors reintegrated into unsafe environments, with many facing further victimization, homelessness, and even suicide.
- Survivors lost access to essential services such as legal, medical, and educational support, forcing some to return to abusive households.
- NGO and donor accountability was highlighted, with poorly coordinated evacuation efforts and misused funds.
- The session called for the reopening of WPCs under international oversight to ensure long-term protection and support for survivors.

Cultural Determinants & Domestic Violence

- Cultural, religious, and socioeconomic factors in Afghanistan perpetuate domestic violence against women.
- 90% of Afghan women have experienced domestic violence, with rigid gender roles, economic dependence, and early marriages contributing to normalized violence.
- The study emphasized the need for cultural and legal reforms, advocacy for raising awareness, and improving access to education and legal protection for survivors.

Access to Justice & Legal Barriers

- The collapse of Afghanistan's legal system post-2021 has left women without legal protection, as key structures like the Elimination of Violence Against Women Court and family courts were dismantled.
- Women are unable to practice law in most areas, and many survivors are left without legal recourse.
- Survivors often faced further exploitation when fleeing to Pakistan and Iran, highlighting the need for international engagement and alternative legal support structures.

Conclusion

The session underscored the urgent need for long-term strategies to address the challenges faced by Afghan women, including the reopening of protection centers, strengthening accountability for NGOs and donors, and advocating for gender-inclusive legal reform in the face of the Taliban's restrictions

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Day 2: 15 November 2024

Session 1: Human Rights and Education

Time: 08:45-10:15

Speakers:

- **Muhammad Zubair Abbasi** (Lecturer, Royal Holloway University of London) – *Faith, Fear, and Tradition: Understanding the Taliban's Policy on Girls' Education*
- **Palwasha Mirbacha** (RWI Research Fellow) – *The Violation of Education as a Human Right in Afghanistan*
- **Malia Shir Mohammad** (RWI Research Fellow) – *Pioneering Uzbek Women in the Afghan Education System: An Intersectional Exploration*
- **Haroun Rahimi** (RWI Research Fellow) – *Female Madrasas and the Islamic Agency of Afghan Women and Girls*

Panel Summary:

The panel analyzed the historical and contemporary challenges of women's education in Afghanistan, with a focus on Taliban ideology, religious education, and women's resilience in navigating systemic barriers.

Historical Contributions and Cultural Barriers

- Uzbek women in Afghanistan historically pioneered education in northern regions, establishing some of the first schools for women.
- Despite this legacy, gender norms ingrained from childhood continue to undermine women's authority in educational settings.

Religious Education as a Double-Edged Sword

- The Taliban's ban on formal women's education has led to a rise in female madrasas, offering a mix of Quranic recitation and hybrid education (IT, English, and vocational skills).
- Some women use religious education as a pathway to general learning, asserting their agency and negotiating space for broader education.
- However, the Taliban's emphasis on religious education over formal schooling limits multidisciplinary opportunities for women.

Taliban Ideological Framework

- The Taliban's opposition to women's education is rooted in a reactionary anti-Western ideology and traditionalist Hanafi interpretations of Islam.
- Women's education is strictly limited to religious studies under rigid gender segregation.

Conclusion: The panel called for targeted advocacy for multidisciplinary education, support for secret schools, and international efforts to amplify Afghan women's voices in education reform.

Parallel Sessions

Parallel Session 1: Political Economy and Human Rights in Afghanistan

Time: 10:45-12:00

Speakers:

- **Hamayun Khan** (Founder, SolaTeach) – *Navigating Power Dynamics and Rights in Post-2021 Afghanistan*
- **Fatema Jafari** – *Political Corruption and Women's Empowerment in Afghanistan (2001-2021)*
- **Mohib Iqbal** (Economist) – *Political Economy and Human Rights in Taliban-Ruled Afghanistan*

Panel Summary

This panel addressed the intersection of political economy, corruption, and human rights in Afghanistan, with a focus on the Taliban's economic policies and their impact on women and marginalized groups.

Economic Collapse and Gender Disparities

- The Taliban takeover in 2021 triggered an economic crisis, with poverty levels rising from 54% to 97%.
- Women's labor force participation dropped from 19% to 16.7%, worsening economic exclusion.

Corruption in Governance and Education

- Ghost schools and teachers siphoned education funds into the hands of political elites and insurgent groups.
- Aid dependency created a cycle of mismanagement, where funding failed to reach those in need.

Conclusion

The panel stressed the importance of robust monitoring systems, targeted aid strategies, and donor transparency to mitigate corruption and promote sustainable development.

Parallel Session 2: Human Rights of Women: Advocacy and Resistance

Time: 10:45-12:00

Speakers:

- Torunn Wimpelmann (Research Director, Chr Michelsen Institute) – Afghan Feminist Mobilisations against the Taliban
- Zinab Attai (PhD Candidate in Comparative Politics, Cornell University) & Tahmina Sobat (PhD Candidate in Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities) – Mothers of Afghanistan: Everyday Forms of Resistance to the Taliban
- Abdullah Athayi (PhD Candidate, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Humboldt University of Berlin) – Navigating Afghanistan Diaspora Women and Girls' Activism in Digital Spaces

Panel Summary

This session highlighted the resilience of Afghan women in their ongoing resistance against the Taliban, both inside and outside Afghanistan. It explored feminist mobilizations, the diverse forms of activism that have emerged, and how Afghan women are leveraging digital platforms to advocate for their rights.

Afghan Feminist Mobilizations & Resistance

- The session focused on various forms of resistance by Afghan women, both overt and covert, against the Taliban's rule.
- Inside Afghanistan, women's resistance varies by location and class, with urban areas seeing more overt protests and rural areas focusing on mitigating the effects of conflict.
- Outside Afghanistan, women's resistance includes awareness campaigns, underground education funding, and resource distribution.
- Digital platforms and private, gender-segregated spaces have become key sites for organizing and resistance, with women creating underground schools and networks for education, skill-sharing, and community solidarity.

- Economic resistance includes informal trade and community solidarity, while covert activism sustains family life and continues intergenerational resistance traditions.

Mothers of Afghanistan & Everyday Resistance

- This research examined the ways in which Afghan mothers resist the Taliban's rule through everyday actions, including managing gender-segregated spaces, repurposing domestic spaces for educational and economic activities, and building resilient communities.
- It highlighted the crucial roles of intergenerational resilience and community building in sustaining resistance against forced marriages and gender-based oppression.
- The study compared Afghan women's resistance to those in Iran, highlighting shared experiences of patriarchal control and the repression of women's rights.

Social Media Activism & Digital Resistance

- The session explored how Afghan diaspora women and girls are using digital spaces to continue their activism and push back against the Taliban's repressive policies.
- Platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are utilized to organize campaigns, spread awareness, and mobilize international support for women's rights.
- Social media activism has emerged as a tool to influence policies, strengthen civil society, and provide platforms for discourse on human rights violations, mental health, and entrepreneurship.
- The session stressed the importance of media literacy for Afghan women to effectively create and share content, as well as the need for political efficacy to ensure change through voting and activism.

Conclusion

The panel emphasized the critical role Afghan women are playing in resisting the Taliban's gender apartheid, with diverse forms of activism emerging both inside and outside Afghanistan. Despite limited international support, women continue to mobilize in various ways, utilizing digital platforms, community-based tactics, and intergenerational knowledge transfer to sustain their resistance. There is a call for greater international solidarity, media literacy for women, and support for grassroots feminist movements.

Parallel Session 3: Afghanistan's Political and Cultural Landscape: Taliban Governance and People-Centred Approaches

Time: 12:00-13:30

Speakers:

- Zabihullah Obaidy (PhD Candidate & Lecturer, University of Bedfordshire/Director of Research Excellence Lab at Afghanistan Law and Political Science Association, ALPA in Exile) – The Muhtasib and the Taliban's Vision for Morality in Afghanistan: Historical Legacy, Contemporary Challenges, and Human Rights Implications
- Atal Ahmadzai (Visiting Assistant Professor, Colby College) – The Taliban Regime's Ontological Totalitarianism: Human Rights Violations, Denial of Human Agency, and Distorted Truths
- Abdul Wase Samim (Former Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Studies, Herat University/Legal Professional & Lecturer) – The Fate of People's Right to Privacy under The Law of The Promotion of Virtue and The Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan
- Mursel Sabir (Project Coordinator for Afghans For A Better Tomorrow) – (De)constructing Afghanistan's Political Culture for A People-Centred Way Forward

Panel Summary

This session explored the Taliban's governance framework, focusing on its historical roots, moral laws, human rights implications, and the suppression of individual autonomy. It also examined Afghanistan's political culture and offered potential paths to peace and reconciliation that center the people's rights.

Taliban's Morality Laws & Historical Context

- The reintroduction of the Muhtasib (morality police) under the Taliban in 2021 is rooted in a long history of Islamic governance, originating during the Abbasid Caliphate.
- The Taliban's version of the Muhtasib role enforces vague morality laws, including dress codes and citizen-enforced policing, which undermine privacy, foster distrust, and impose non-Afghan cultural norms.
- The reintroduction of these laws is seen as a step backward in Afghanistan's modernization efforts, where the morality police had previously been abolished.

Human Agency & Totalitarian Governance

- Under the Taliban regime, Afghanistan's governance system lacks the principles of a modern state, specifically the social contract. The Taliban justifies policies like restrictions on women's education by presenting them as

protections against "Western stress," but critics argue that these policies suppress human agency and autonomy.

- The regime's totalitarian approach is evident in the issuance of over 128 decrees aimed at reshaping Afghan society according to a rigid interpretation of "divine will," stripping individuals of their freedom and self-determination.
- The panel noted the regime's undermining of autonomy, as theorized by scholars such as James Graffin and Amartya Sen, and the severe restrictions on personal freedoms.

Privacy, Morality, and Legal Contradictions

- The enforcement of virtue promotion laws by the Taliban directly contradicts established Islamic principles of privacy, which protect individuals' rights to make personal choices without external interference.
- Historical Islamic jurisprudence advocates for privacy as a fundamental human right, yet the Taliban's laws introduce widespread surveillance and punishment, infringing upon this core principle.

Roadmap to Peace & Reconciliation

- Addressing Afghanistan's future requires an understanding of its political culture, historically shaped by centralization under kingship, elite rule, and the reliance on Islam as a legitimizing force.
- To foster sustainable peace, the panel emphasized the need for governance reforms that engage both the diaspora and local populations. It called for formalizing informal systems, like tribal tribunals, and considering a federal system to address Afghanistan's complex ethnic and historical divisions.
- These reforms would create a more inclusive, people-centered approach to governance, paving the way for reconciliation and lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

The panel concluded that the Taliban's repressive rule continues to violate human rights and suppress individual freedoms, with severe implications for privacy, education, and personal agency. However, the path forward lies in acknowledging Afghanistan's complex political culture and working toward inclusive, people-centered governance reforms. A federal system and greater engagement with local communities and the diaspora could lay the foundation for a more equitable and sustainable future.

Parallel Session 4: Governance, Rights, and Inclusivity: Challenges and Pathways Forward

Time: 12:00-13:30

Speakers:

- **M. Ayub Yusufzai** (PhD Scholar, Lovely Professional University, India) – *Comparative Study of Constitutional Review Models in Post-War Countries and Suggestions for Afghanistan’s Future*
- **Zaker Hussain Ershad** (Professor, University of Bucharest) – *Unjust Political Structure and Ethnically Exclusive Governance Model in Afghanistan*
- **Hamid A. Formuli** (RWI Research Fellow) – *Leaving Many Behind: A Study of the Current State of Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination in Afghanistan*

Panel Summary

This session explored the need for constitutional reform, governance models, and inclusivity in Afghanistan’s future.

Key Findings

- A majority (70%) of surveyed Afghan university students support a constitutional review mechanism to ensure stability and protect human rights.
- Federalism was discussed as a way to break ethnic hierarchies and promote distributive justice, referencing models in Switzerland and India.
- Inclusivity remains a challenge, with 94% of surveyed Afghans believing the current regime is not representative.

Conclusion

Panelists stressed the need for an independent constitutional court, broad-based governance reforms, and meaningful political participation for marginalized groups.

Parallel Session 5: Afghan Civil Society and Diaspora – Activism, Digital Innovation, and Freedom of Expression

Time: 14:30-15:45

Speakers:

- **Bahishta Zahir Hellali** (Project Officer, Hamrah Initiative) – *Afghan Civil Society in Exile – The Role of Women, Challenges, and Opportunities*

- **Abdullah Ammar** (Research Assistant, Center for Conflict Studies, Marburg) – *Agency and Resilience – Afghan Diaspora Organizations’ Humanitarian and Advocacy Responses*
- **Mohammad Anvar Moheghy** (Postdoctoral Researcher) – *Customizing Approaches and Leveraging Digital Innovations to Fit Afghan Cultural and Religious Contexts*

Panel Summary

This session focused on how Afghan civil society actors, particularly those in exile, continue advocacy, education, and humanitarian work despite Taliban restrictions.

Key Findings

- Nearly 50% of Afghan civil society organizations in exile are women-led, focusing on education, advocacy, and survival networks.
- Diaspora groups in Germany, for example, have shifted their efforts toward covert operations and targeted aid to women and children.
- Digital activism, through encrypted messaging apps and community-driven platforms, allows Afghan voices to be heard while minimizing security risks.

Conclusion

Collaboration between diaspora organizations and local activists remains crucial in preserving Afghanistan’s civil society. Greater funding, cybersecurity awareness, and cultural adaptation of human rights frameworks can enhance these efforts.

Parallel Session 6: Gender, Intersectionality, and Rights

Time: 14:30-15:45

Speakers:

- **Abdullah Shafae** (Researcher, Universities of Turin, Padua, Milan) – *The Roots of Discrimination Against Women in Afghanistan*
- **Nargis Sadiq** (Country Manager, OMID International) – *Lived Experiences of Uzbek, Tajik, and Pashtun Women in Northern Afghanistan*
- **Latifa Alavi Jafari** (RWI Research Fellow) – *Intersectionality and Human Rights: Ensuring Access to Maternal Health for Minority Groups*

Panel Summary

This session examined how gender discrimination is embedded in Afghanistan's legal, social, and economic structures.

Findings

- Women have historically been confined by tribal social structures and religious extremism, restricting their autonomy.
- The Taliban's decrees are rooted in conservative interpretations of Islam that prioritize social hierarchy over individual rights.
- Ethnic minority women face compounded barriers in accessing maternal healthcare, exacerbated by financial and geographic limitations.

Conclusion

The panel called for greater investment in remote healthcare solutions, legal advocacy, and international pressure to counteract gender-based discrimination.

Plenary Session: Systematic Discrimination and Human Rights Struggles of the Hazara Community

Time: 16:15-17:45

Speakers:

- **Ali Y. Adili** (Independent Policy Researcher) – *The Forced Displacement of the Hazaras – The Taliban's Strategic Goal of Demobilization*
- **Dr. Niamatullah Ibrahimi** (Senior Research Fellow, University of Melbourne) – *The Discourses of Persecution of Hazaras in Afghanistan*
- **Kobra Moradi** (RWI Research Fellow) – *From Land Disputes to Loss of Livelihoods – Assessing Human Rights Violations in Hazarajat*
- **Farkhondeh Akbari** (Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Monash University) – *At the Intersection of Persecution and Apartheid – The Case of Hazara Women in Afghanistan*

Panel Summary

This session examined the multi-layered oppression faced by the Hazara community, including forced displacement, ethnic discrimination, and gender-based violence.

Key Findings

- Since the Taliban's return, at least 61 targeted attacks on Hazara communities have been documented.
- Hazara women face compounded discrimination as both women and members of an ethnic minority. Attacks on maternity hospitals and schools are deliberate acts of erasure.
- Land confiscations are carried out under the pretext of resolving historical disputes but primarily serve to displace Hazaras.
- The Taliban's discourse frames Hazaras as "internal others," reinforcing systemic marginalization and persecution.

Conclusion

The panel underscored the urgent need for an intersectional approach in advocating for Hazara rights, including targeted advocacy, legal action, and stronger international accountability mechanisms.

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Recommendations for Future Support and Follow-Up

On the third day of the conference, participants engaged in a discussion and feedback session, emphasizing the value of bringing together Afghan academics and experts from diverse backgrounds. They highlighted the conference's effectiveness in fostering meaningful engagement on key human rights issues and commended RWI and SASNET for providing a neutral and productive space. The combination of academic and practitioner perspectives, along with the thematic discussions, was considered highly relevant.

To further strengthen future initiatives, participants put forward the following key recommendations:

Future Support for Afghan Academics and Experts

- **Incorporate Comparative Perspectives:** Including experiences from other post-conflict contexts, particularly in areas such as diversity and transitional justice, would broaden discussions and enrich insights.
- **Allow More Time for In-Depth Analysis:** While the conference provided a valuable platform, a more focused approach to specific issues would enable deeper exploration of the Afghan context.
- **Enhance Practitioner-Academic Collaboration:** Strengthening opportunities for interaction between academics and practitioners would help bridge theory and practice more effectively.
- **Establish a Network for Ongoing Engagement:** Creating a structured network of Afghan human rights scholars and experts would facilitate continued collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Key Recommendations on Human Rights Issues

- **Strengthen Documentation and Accountability Mechanisms:** Ensure robust systems for documenting human rights violations and holding perpetrators accountable.
- **Increase Support for Afghan Women-Led Initiatives:** Prioritize initiatives led by Afghan women, particularly in education and digital advocacy, to drive sustainable change.

- **Promote Inclusive Governance Models:** Advocate for governance frameworks that reflect Afghanistan’s ethnic, religious, and political diversity to ensure broader representation.
- **Support Afghan Diaspora and Exiled Civil Society:** Provide sustained support to Afghan diaspora communities and exiled civil society to maintain advocacy and humanitarian efforts.
- **Protect Marginalized Communities:** Implement targeted protections for at-risk groups, including the Hazara community and women’s rights defenders.

These recommendations aim to guide future support efforts, ensuring that Afghan academics, experts, and human rights defenders continue to have the resources and platforms needed to contribute meaningfully to the protection and promotion of human rights in Afghanistan.

Annex 1

Call for Proposals

“The Future of Human Rights in Afghanistan: Between Rule and Agency”

organised by

***the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and International
Humanitarian Law (RWI)***

and

the South Asian Studies Network (SASNET)

Lund, Sweden

November 14-15, 2024

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI) and the South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) are pleased to announce the upcoming international conference “Advancing Human Rights in Afghanistan: Between Rule and Agency”, to be organized in Lund, Sweden, on November 14-15, 2024.

The conference aims to foster interdisciplinary dialogue and critical reflection on the current state of human rights in Afghanistan. It seeks to blend cutting-edge research with practical solutions, ensuring that diverse perspectives and experiences on human rights issues are represented. We encourage contributions from Afghan scholars, students, CSO representatives, and practitioners, and particularly welcome those willing to bridge academic disciplines and connect theoretical insights with practical applications.

Background and focus

RWI is an independent academic institute that currently is implementing a human rights programme on Afghanistan (2024-2026)¹ with the overall objective “to contribute to strengthened conditions for inclusive governance, peace, and respect for human rights and gender equality in Afghanistan”. In order to reach this objective, one particular result that the programme aims to achieve is to increase scholarship and academic discourse on the human rights situation in the country. SASNET is an organisation for cooperation between faculties, departments and individual researchers that are engaged in research on South Asia. The overarching purpose of the organisation is to promote research on South Asia. Aligned with these goals, RWI and SASNET is organizing a research conference that aims to explore key human rights issues related to the current situation in the country.

More than three years have passed since the Taliban seized power of Afghanistan on 15 August 2021. Since then, the country has faced a deepening humanitarian and human rights crisis. Human rights organizations have repeatedly pointed out that policies imposed by the Taliban clearly violate Afghanistan’s obligations under international human rights law. A recent statement made by UN experts pointed out that: “Over the past three years, the people of Afghanistan, especially women and girls, have been subjected to an appalling and intensifying attack on their rights and freedoms by a regime that lacks legitimacy and inclusivity, quashes all forms of dissent, represses civil society and the media, and has shown a flagrant disregard for the principles of justice, non-discrimination, equality, and the rule of law. The situation continues to deteriorate, and stronger and more effective international action is needed immediately”².

The ongoing humanitarian crisis has added complexity and challenges to this already difficult situation, with an estimated 29 million Afghans in need of humanitarian aid. At the same time as the humanitarian needs are growing, donors are retracting and cutting funds while there are indications that the Taliban increasingly are interfering in the operations of aid agencies.

This conference aims to address the grave human rights situation in Afghanistan by providing a platform for an evidence based dialogue on key issues of concern, combining theoretical understandings with practical approaches. The objective is to explore how the latest advances in human rights research on Afghanistan can interact with the work carried out by human rights practitioners, in order to generate new knowledge and actionable policy recommendations. By bringing together human rights academics, practitioners, and activists, the conference will explore solutions, share knowledge, and provide a space for the participants to strategize around joint efforts to protect the rights and dignity of the Afghan people.

¹ For more information, see <https://rwi.lu.se/afghanistan-programme/>

² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/international-community-must-not-normalise-taliban-rule-afghanistan>

Conference Themes/Tracks:

The conference encourages applicants to send in proposals related to the following themes:

1. Human Rights Violations under Taliban Rule

This track will explore the breadth and scope of human rights abuses under the Taliban regime. Key areas:

- Examination of specific human rights abuses, including gender-based violence, suppression of freedom of expression, arbitrary detentions, torture, and extrajudicial killings.
- Documentation and analysis of the legal frameworks and policies imposed by the Taliban that violate international human rights law.

2. Analysis of the current humanitarian situation, including food insecurity, healthcare access, and displacement.

This theme will focus on the escalating humanitarian needs in Afghanistan and the complexities of delivering aid under the Taliban. Key areas:

- Discussion on the challenges faced by international and local aid organizations, including Taliban interference and donor withdrawal.
- The role humanitarian and human rights principles in strategies and actions for ensuring effective aid delivery

3. Gender-Based Repression: Impact on Women and Girls

This track will delve into the severe restrictions placed on women and girls, analyzing their impact on education, employment, and basic freedoms. Key areas:

- Detailed examination of the impact of Taliban policies on the rights and freedoms of women and girls in Afghanistan.
- Case studies on education, employment, and social participation under the Taliban regime.
- Approaches to international advocacy and support for Afghan women's rights.

4. Civil Society, Media, and Freedom of Expression

This theme will investigate the shrinking civil space under the Taliban, focusing on the systematic repression of civil society and the media. Key areas:

- The state of civil society and media under Taliban rule, including the risks faced by journalists and activists.
- The role of international media and civil society in highlighting and countering repression in Afghanistan.
- Digital activism and alternative forms of resistance in the face of state repression.

5. Groups in Situations of Vulnerability: Children, Persons with Disabilities, Minorities, and Other At-Risk Populations

This theme will focus on the specific challenges faced by children, persons with disabilities, and other groups in situations of heightened vulnerability. Key areas:

- The impact of the humanitarian crisis on children's education, health, and safety.
- Addressing the neglect and abuse of persons with disabilities under the Taliban's rules
- Tailoring humanitarian interventions to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

6. International Legal Responses and Accountability Mechanisms

This track will examine potential international legal avenues for holding the Taliban accountable for their actions. Key areas:

- Exploration of international legal avenues for holding the Taliban accountable for human rights violations.
- The role of international bodies, including the United Nations, in monitoring and responding to the situation in Afghanistan.
- Potential for international sanctions, criminal prosecutions, and other accountability mechanisms.

7. Future of Afghanistan: Governance, Stability, and Peacebuilding

This theme will explore the potential paths towards a stable and inclusive governance structure in Afghanistan. Key areas:

- Discussions on the future governance structure of Afghanistan and the potential paths to stability.
- Peacebuilding efforts and the role of the international community in supporting a transition to a more inclusive and legitimate government.
- Lessons learned from past international interventions and their implications for future policy.

8. Political Economy and Human Rights

This theme examines the relationship between economic policies and human rights in Afghanistan, focusing on how the Taliban's economic strategies impact the population's rights and freedoms. Key areas:

- Economic Control and Suppression: Analysis of how the Taliban's control over resources and economic policies contributes to human rights violations.
- Sanctions and Humanitarian Impact: Exploration of how international economic sanctions influence human rights and humanitarian aid distribution.
- Illicit Economies: The role of the opium trade and other illicit activities in financing the Taliban and perpetuating human rights abuses.

Call for Abstracts:

We invite scholars, researchers, practitioners, and activists to submit abstracts for paper presentations addressing one (or more) of the themes outlined above. Abstracts should critically engage with the thematic focus area(s) and propose innovative approaches, empirical research, or theoretical insights.

Priority will be given to abstracts from Afghan scholars and practitioners, as we recognize the importance of centering local perspectives and expertise in discussions about Afghanistan's human rights challenges.

Financial support: The organizers will provide selected presenters with Afghan nationality financial support needed to participate in the conference. This support includes coverage of travel expenses, accommodation, and per diem allowances throughout the duration of the conference. Financial support for non-Afghan participants can be provided if the participant is unable to self-finance.

Submission Guidelines:

- Abstracts should be no more than 300 words in length.
- Please indicate the theme(s) your abstract addresses.
- Include a brief biographical statement (maximum 100 words) detailing your affiliation, expertise, and relevant experience.
- Include information if the applicant will attend in person or online
- Submissions should be sent to zoya.noori@rwi.lu.se by **October 6, 2024**. Deadline is **24.00 CET**.

Selected presenters will be notified by **October 11** and invited to develop a conference paper to be submitted to RWI/SASNET by **4 November**.

Online participation: The conference will prioritize in-person participation but there will be possibilities online participation in cases where invited participants cannot travel to Sweden.

Contact

Should you have any questions, please contact David Eile: david.eile@rwi.lu.se

Annex 2

Agenda

”The Future of Human Rights in Afghanistan: Between Rule and Agency”

organised by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI)
and South Asian Study Network (SASNET)

Lund/Online

November 14-16, 2024

Venues:

Kulturen, Hornsbergssalen: <https://www.kulturen.com/welcome-kulturens-museums/>

Palaestra: <https://kulturportallund.se/en/palaestra-et-odeum-2/>

Online

Lunches and coffee/tea breaks will be served at the Restaurant of Kulturen.

14 November 2024

Time	Activity
08.45-09.00	<u>Hornsbergssalen, Kulturen</u> Registration
09:00-09:30	Welcome & introduction Peter Lundberg, Director RWI Catarina Kinnvall, Director, SASNET
09:30-10:30	Keynote speech: The EU's Policy towards Afghanistan – What's Human Rights Got to Do with It? Tomas Niklasson, EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan
	Coffee/tea break at Kulturen Restaurant

10:30-11:00	
11:00-12:00	<p><u>Hornsbergssalen</u></p> <p>Accountability for Human Rights Violations in Afghanistan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Accountability for Human Rights Violations and Violations of International Humanitarian Law, RWI Strategic Study</i> Huma Saeed, Independent Consultant/ Country Advisor MADRE • <i>Human Rights Violations and Gender-Based Repression under Taliban Rule: A Call for Accountability</i> (online) Benazir Matahar Latifi, Defenders of Equality, Freedom and Advancement for Women (DEFAW) <p>Moderator: Richard Bennett, UN Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan/Visiting Professor RWI</p>
12:00-13:00	Lunch
13:00-14:30	<p><u>Parallel Sessions: Hornsbergssalen and Palaestra</u></p> <p><u>Session 1: Hornsbergssalen</u></p> <p>Humanitarian Aid and Human Rights in Afghanistan: Balancing Sanctions, Inequality, and Crisis Response under Taliban Rule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ethnic and Geographic Disparities in Humanitarian Aid Delivery under Taliban Rule: A Human Rights and Horizontal Inequalities Approach</i> (potentially online) Mohammad Mustafa Raheal, PhD Candidate, University of Bath • <i>Navigating Sanctions: Private Sector Engagement and Humanitarian Impact in Afghanistan</i> (online) Layma Murtaza, International Development and Strategy Specialist

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analysing the Current Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan: Food Insecurity, Healthcare Access, and Displacement Under Taliban Rule</i> Ahmad Faisal Sidiqi, Safety Advisor, International NGO Safety Organization (INSO) • <i>Explores the complex interplay between humanitarian aid, sanctions, and the Afghan economy with a focus on human rights situation in the country</i> Mohib Iqbal, Independent Economist <p>Moderator: Hayley N. Evans, Research Fellow, Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and Rule of Law</p> <p>Session 2: Palaestra</p> <p>Media, Civil Society and Human Rights in Afghanistan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Silent Voices: The Perilous Fight of Afghan Women Journalists for Freedom of Expression Under Taliban Rule</i> (online) Zahra Noory, Media Professional • <i>Shrinking Civil Space under Taliban Rule: Analyzing the Repression of Civil Society Actors and Media Practitioners in Afghanistan</i> Ahmad Jamshid Fardi, Chair of the Afghanistan Human Rights Defenders Committee of Northern Afghanistan in Exile • <i>Examining the impact of the UN's stance on the escalation of Freedom of Expression's restrictions in post-Collapsed Afghanistan</i> (online) Rokhsar Sadat, LLM, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia • <i>Civil Society, Media, and Freedom of Expression, focus on intersection media censorship and human rights</i> (online) Wahidullah Ghazikhail, Director, Center for Studies and Research <p>Moderator: M Abul Ahrar Ramizpoor, Human Rights Researcher and Activist</p>
<p>14:30-15:45</p>	<p>Parallel sessions continued</p> <p>Session 1: Hornsbergssalen</p>

	<p>Rights of displaced, migrants, and refugees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Understanding physical protection risks faced by Afghan migrants on the move</i> Fayez Sahak, Executive director of the Climate-Displacement Action in Afghanistan • <i>Barriers to Educational Advancement for Afghan Refugee Women: Insights from Afghan Women in Tajikistan</i> Rona Karimi, MA Peace and Conflict, International Christian University, Japan • <i>Exploring Internally Displaced and Returnee Women’s Access to Housing, Land and Property Rights</i> (online) Geety Sultani, Advocacy and Information Coordinator, Norwegian Refugee Council, Afghanistan <p>Moderator: Catarina Kinnvall, Director, SASNET</p> <p>Session 2: Palaestra Human Rights of Women: Addressing Violence, Justice, and Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cultural Determinants and Lived Experiences of Domestic Violence Among Women in Afghanistan: A Case Study of Bamiyan</i> Hassan Rahnaward Ghulami, PhD Candidate, University of Bologna • <i>Support to the rights of VAW survivors via formal or informal justice mechanisms</i> (online) Humaira Rasuli, RWI Research Fellow • <i>Unveiling the post- 2021 Realities within Women's Protection Centres in Afghanistan: Navigating Challenges Amidst Socio-Political Shifts</i> Mitra Tanomand, RWI Research Fellow <p>Moderator: Orzala Nemat, Director, Development Research Group</p>
<p>15:45- 16:15</p>	<p>Coffee/tea break at Kulturen Restaurant</p>

16:15-17:00	Summing up discussion at Hornsbergssalen in plenary
19:00	Dinner at Khatoon

15 November

Time	Activity
08.45-10.15	<p><u>Hornsbergssalen Kulturen</u></p> <p>Human Rights and Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Faith, Fear, and Tradition: Understanding the Taliban's Policy on Girls' Education</i> (potentially online) Muhammad Zubair Abbasi, Lecturer, School of Law and Social Sciences, Royal Holloway University of London • <i>The Violation of Education as a Human Right in Afghanistan: Impact of Taliban Educational Policies on Access to Quality Education and Afghan Society</i> Palwasha Mirbacha, RWI Research Fellow • <i>Pioneering Uzbek Women in Educational Process in Afghanistan: An Intersectional Exploration of Uzbek Women's Historical Struggles</i> Malia Shir Mohammad, RWI Research Fellow • <i>Female Madrasas and Islamic Agency of Afghan Girls and Women: How Religious Education is Being Used by Afghan Women and Girls under the Taliban Regime</i> (online) Haroun Rahimi, RWI Research Fellow <p>Moderator: Hamid Formuli, RWI - TBC</p>

<p>10:15- 10:45</p>	<p>Coffee/tea break at Kulturen Restaurant</p>
<p>10:45- 12:00</p>	<p>Parallel sessions: Hornsbergssalen and Palaestra Upper Room</p> <p><u>Session 1: Hornsbergssalen</u></p> <p>Political Economy and Human Rights in Afghanistan: Power Dynamics, Corruption, and Women's Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Political Economy: Navigating Power Dynamics and Rights in Post-2021 Afghanistan</i> Hamayun Khan, Founder of SolaTeach/Finance Professional • <i>Political Corruption and Women's Empowerment in Afghanistan (2001-2021): Mechanisms, Impacts, and Donor Responses (online)</i> Fatema Jafari, Former provincial council representative in Afghanistan • <i>Political Economy and Human Rights in Taliban Ruled Afghanistan</i> Mohib Iqbal, Economist <p>Moderator: Morten Koch Andersen, Director of Research and Education, RWI</p> <p><u>Session 2: Paleastra Upper Room</u></p> <p>Human Rights of Women: Advocacy and Resistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Afghan Feminist Mobilisations against the Taliban</i>

	<p>Torunn Wimpelmann, Research Director at Chr Michelsen Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mothers of Afghanistan: Everyday Forms of Resistance to the Taliban</i> Zinab Attai, PhD candidate in Comparative Politics, Cornell University & Tahmina Sobat, PhD candidate in Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (online) • <i>Navigating Afghanistan Diaspora Women and Girls' Activism in Digital Spaces</i> Abdullah Athayi, PhD Candidate, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Humboldt University of Berlin <p>Moderator: Latifa Javari Alavi, RWI Research Fellow</p>
<p>12:00-13:30</p>	<p>Parallel sessions continued</p> <p><u>Session 1: Hornsbergssalen</u></p> <p>Afghanistan's Political and Cultural Landscape: Taliban Governance and People-Centred Approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Muhtasib and the Taliban's Vision for Morality in Afghanistan: Historical Legacy, Contemporary Challenges and Human Rights Implications</i> (potentially online) Zabihullah Obaidy, PhD Candidate & Lecturer, University of Bedfordshire/Director of Research Excellence Lab at Afghanistan Law and Political Science Association (ALPA in Exile) • <i>The Taliban Regime's Ontological Totalitarianism: Human Rights Violations, Denial of Human Agency, and Distorted Truths</i> Atal Ahmadzai, Visiting Assistant Professor at Colby College

- *The Fate of People's Right to Privacy under The Law of The Promotion of Virtue and The Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan* (potentially online)
Abdul Wase Samim, former Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Studies at Herat University/Legal Professional & Lecturer
- *(De)constructing Afghanistan's Political Culture for A People-Centred Way Forward*
Mursel Sabir, Project Coordinator for Afghans For A Better Tomorrow

Moderator: Stephan Ollick, Acting Head of Projects – Afghanistan | Kyrgyzstan | Tajikistan, Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law

Session 2: Palaestra Upper Room

Governance, Rights, and Inclusivity: Challenges and Pathways Forward

- *Incorporating Marginalised Voices into Afghanistan's Social and Political Discourse for an Inclusive Future*
Musa Aziz, Director of Program Development, INSAN Foundation for Research and Media
- *Comparative Study of Constitutional Review Models in post-war Countries and Suggestions for Afghanistan's Future*
M. Ayub Yusufzai, PhD. Scholar at Lovely Professional University, India
- *Unjust political structure and ethnically exclusive governance model in Afghanistan*
Zaker Hussain Ershad, Professor at the University of Bucharest

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Leaving Many Behind; A Study of the Current State of Inclusivity and Non-discrimination in Afghanistan</i> Hamid A. Formuli, RWI Research Fellow <p>Moderator: Christie S. Warren, Fulbright-Lund Distinguished Chair in Public International Law, Lund University/RWI</p>
<p>13:30- 14:30</p>	<p>Lunch</p>
<p>14:30- 15:45</p>	<p>Parallel sessions continued</p> <p><u>Session 1: Hornsbergssalen</u></p> <p>Afghan Civil Society and Diaspora: Activism, Digital Innovation, and Freedom of Expression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Afghan Civil Society in Exile: Role of Women, Challenges, and Opportunities</i> Bahishta Zahir Hellali, Project Officer, Hamrah Initiative • <i>Agency and Resilience –Afghan Diaspora Organization’s Humanitarian and Advocacy Responses Amid Taliban Rule</i> Abdullah Ammar, Research Assistant, Center for Conflict Studies, Maburg • <i>Customizing Approaches and Leveraging Digital Innovations to Fit Afghan Cultural and Religious Contexts</i> Mohammad Anvar Moheghy, Postdoctoral Researcher & Murtaza Mohiqi, Assistant Professor, University of Agder, Norway <p>Moderator: Christine Evans, Senior Researcher and Lecturer, RWI</p>

	<p><u>Session 2: Palaestra Upper Room</u></p> <p>Gender, Intersectionality, and Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The roots of discrimination against women in Afghanistan</i> Abdullah Shafae, Researcher, Universities of Turin, Padua and Milan • <i>The lived experiences of 30 Uzbek, Tadjik and Pashtun women, aged 18-30 in northern Afghanistan</i> Nargis Sadiq, Country Manager, OMID International, Turkey • <i>Intersectionality and Human Rights: Ensuring Access to maternal health in Minorities Groups</i> Latifa Alavi Jafari, RWI Research Fellow <p>Moderator: Anna Bruce, Senior Researcher, RWI</p>
<p>15:45- 16:15</p>	<p>Coffee/tea break at Kulturen Restaurant</p>
<p>16:15- 17:45</p>	<p><u>Hornsbergssalen</u></p> <p>Systematic discrimination and human rights struggles of the Hazara community in Afghanistan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Forced Displacement of the Hazaras: The Taliban's strategic goal of demobilisation (online)</i> Ali Y. Adili, Independent Policy Researcher & Analyst • <i>The Discourses of Persecution of Hazaras in Afghanistan</i> Dr Niamatullah Ibrahim, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>From Land Disputes to Loss of Livelihoods: Assessing the Human Rights Violations Arising from Land Disputes in Hazarajat</i> Kobra Moradi, RWI Research Fellow • <i>At the Intersection of Persecution and Apartheid: the Case of Hazara Women in Afghanistan</i> Farkhondeh Akbari, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Monash University <p>Moderator: Richard Bennett, UN Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan/Visiting Professor RWI</p>
17:45-18:15	Final reflections and closing in Hornsbergssalen, Kulturen

16 November

Time	Activity
10.00-11.30	<p><u>Grand Hotel</u></p> <p>Ways forward regarding support on human rights research: Discussion and feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritized areas of research and academic activities for 2025 • Possibility to form a network of Afghan human rights scholars

RAOUL WALLENBERG INSTITUTE

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