



New York, 10 May 2022

Excellency,

Ireland and Mexico, as co-chairs of the Security Council Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, are writing in response to the 7 May announcement by the Taliban that women in Afghanistan will be forced to fully cover their faces in public and banned from leaving home except in cases of necessity. We are appalled by this decision, which clearly contravenes basic principles of human rights and further confirms that the Taliban has no intention of promoting, respecting or upholding the rights of women and girls, or of honouring the multiple commitments that they have made to Afghan women and to the international community in recent months.

Since the take-over of the Taliban in August 2021, the IEG has met twice to discuss the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan. On 18 February, we heard from Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNAMA, Deborah Lyons, and the UN Country Team. The IEG heard that women have been systematically erased from public life, those who have protested violently repressed, abducted, killed or subjected to other forms of reprisals, and that girls continue to be denied their education. We heard that women's rights to freedom of movement had been greatly restricted already after a directive issued by the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice and that their access to essential services had been severely curtailed. In a country suffering such a grave economic and humanitarian crisis, the Taliban's attack on women's and girls' fundamental rights is deeply exacerbating suffering, and eroding the foundations needed to create a peaceful and inclusive society and to pave the way for sustainable development.

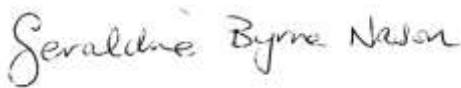
The Security Council has provided the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) with a strong mandate both in terms of monitoring violations, abuses and reprisals committed against women, and to support and promote the full protection of the human rights of women and girls. For the first time, the Council mandated UNAMA to mainstream women's rights throughout its work. We fully support UNAMA as it undertakes its new mandate. We also underline the importance of supporting Afghan civil society, including women peacebuilders, women human rights defenders and women's organisations inside and outside Afghanistan, in monitoring the human rights situation.

The decision by the Taliban shows an utter disregard for the Council's clear message that women must play a full, equal and meaningful role in all aspects of public and political life in Afghanistan. Moreover, the Taliban must immediately comply with Afghanistan's international obligations on human rights including those under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

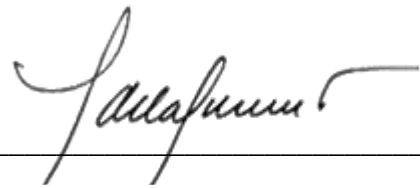
There has been a clear message from the international community that the Taliban's gross abuses of the rights of women and girls will not be tolerated. We call on all members of the Security Council to unite and to express clearly its rejection of the Taliban's actions, which are systematically eroding the rights of women and girls.

We would be grateful for the circulation of this letter as a document of the Security Council.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.



Geraldine Byrne Nason
Permanent Representative of
Ireland to the United Nations



Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez
Permanent Representative of
Mexico to the United Nations

H.E. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield
President of the Security Council
United Nations Headquarters
New York

cc. H.E. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations