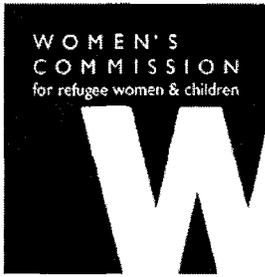


# **Emerging Challenges: Closing Gaps in the Protection of Afghan Women and Girls**

A Report on the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children's Mission to Pakistan and Afghanistan



Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children  
March 2003



Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children  
122 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10168-1289  
tel. 212.551.3111 or 3088; fax. 212.551.3180  
info@womenscommission.org  
www.womenscommission.org

© March 2003 by Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children  
All rights reserved.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children works to improve the lives and defend the rights of refugee and internally displaced women, children, and adolescents. We advocate for their inclusion and participation in programs of humanitarian assistance and protection. We provide technical expertise and policy advice to donors and organizations that work with refugees and the displaced. We make recommendations to policy makers based on rigorous research and information gathered on fact-finding missions. We join with refugee women, children, and adolescents to ensure that their voices are heard from the community level to the highest levels of governments and international organizations. We do this in the conviction that their empowerment is the surest route to the greater well-being of all forcibly displaced people.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This report written by Mary Diaz, Executive Director and Ramina Johal, Project Manager, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children with contributions from Sarah Spencer. It was edited by Diana Quick and Sarah Spencer of the Women's Commission.



## Contents

I.	Overview.....	1
II.	Pakistan.....	2
III.	Afghanistan.....	3
	<i>Kabul</i> .....	3
	Ministry of Women’s Affairs.....	4
	Non-governmental women’s organizations.....	6
	<i>Herat</i> .....	7
	Deportees.....	7
	Internally displaced persons.....	7
	Women’s organizations.....	8
IV.	Recommendations.....	9
	<i>Recommendations for UN agencies and the government of Afghanistan:</i> .....	9
	<i>Recommendations for international and local NGOs:</i> .....	9
	<i>Recommendations for donors:</i> .....	10
	Related Women's Commission Reports.....	10
	Appendices.....	11
	<i>Appendix 1. List of Donors in Afghanistan and Pakistan</i> .....	11
	<i>Appendix 2. Select List of Afghan Women’s Organizations</i> .....	15

## I. Overview

This report summarizes findings from the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children's (Women's Commission) mission to Islamabad and Peshawar, Pakistan, Kabul and Herat, Afghanistan, from November 11 – 24, 2002, and includes recommendations for action. The Women's Commission's work in the region includes three components:

1. Afghan Women's Fund: this fund provides small grants to Afghan women's organizations for projects promoting the rights of women and girls, including access to healthcare, education and employment opportunities.
2. Reproductive Health for Refugees: this project works to improve refugees' access to family planning, emergency obstetrics, services to prevent and treat rape, gender-based violence (GBV) and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.
3. Monitoring and reporting of protection issues for women, girls and boys.

Millions of Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban, and millions more are still on the move. Violence and factional fighting, food insecurity and lack of shelter and employment are some of the reasons Afghans in Pakistan said they did not plan to return to Afghanistan in the near future. Within Afghanistan, internally displaced people (IDPs) are crowding into Kabul and other cities, trying to find jobs and shelter because their rural communities cannot support them. In western Afghanistan, boys aged 12-17 are attempting to cross the border into Iran in search of employment. Many Afghans are making plans to return to Pakistan or Iran, saying they have no jobs and no way to support their families. They will leave wives and children behind in overcrowded homes in Kabul or in remote camps and settlements. Meanwhile, Iran and Pakistan continue to deport refugees, including children, pregnant women and men who are heads of households, splitting up families and subjecting them to fear and abuse.

At the same time, Afghanistan is experiencing profound changes. In Kabul and other urban areas, women are once again taking charge of their lives. They are enrolled in literacy courses, computer training and English language programs. Many women have found jobs and feel free to go to market and to the mosque. Girls are enrolled in school. However, there are many women and girls who do not have freedom of movement, who continue to suffer abuse and are deprived of shelter, food and income. Gender violence is pervasive; girls are forced to marry in their teens, and in rural areas where local customs prevail, girls may be bartered and sold, or captured as war booty.

A number of vibrant women's organizations are running literacy, computer, skills training and other programs and are coordinating their activities through the Afghan Women's Network. The Ministry for Women's Affairs (MOWA) has developed a plan of action that includes establishing women's centers in each of the country's 32 provinces. Many international donors are supporting programs to improve the lives of women and girls and advance their rights. However, there is very little coordination of these activities and many donors are providing grants to the same set of organizations. This is logical as this group of women's organizations has a proven track record. But new groups, as well

as groups which operated secretly throughout the Taliban era, are easily overlooked when they should be nurtured and developed.

The appendices at the end of this report list donors and a select group of Afghan women's organizations.

## II. Pakistan

Despite the massive return of Afghans – one of the largest refugee returns in recent history – neighboring countries continue to host an estimated 3.5 million Afghan refugees.

Pakistan is host to an estimated 1.8 million Afghan refugees.<sup>1</sup> Some refugees – including a significant number of widows – chose not to return to Afghanistan last year. Many Afghans who did return to Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban are now going back to Pakistan because they have not been able to find adequate shelter or employment and fear the harsh winters. Some anticipated this phenomenon, dubbed “reverse flow” by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but there is no data on the numbers of Afghans returning to Pakistan or Iran. UNHCR cites a lack of resources and staff to monitor the reverse flow. Though the Women's Commission was not aware of any other group documenting this population in Peshawar, FOCUS, may possibly be engaged in this type of monitoring in Karachi.<sup>2</sup> Monitoring, however, is difficult as refugees are returning via mountain passes and settling in urban communities rather than refugee camps that are run by UNHCR.

The Women's Commission confirmed that there is a reverse flow of Afghans and it is likely a significant number. One woman interviewed had returned to the refugee village of Kacha Gari, near Peshawar, in early November. As she crossed the mountain pass on foot with her family, she saw “countless” others on the road, returning to Pakistan. International Rescue Committee -Peshawar reports that Female Education Project student enrolment dropped more than 70 percent during the spring. The numbers have now increased and returned to their original size and most of the new students are recent returns from Afghanistan.

Whether they remained in Pakistan or have recently returned, the refugee population has major needs. Women and girls have no access to reproductive health programs or services partly because they don't exist and are not provided by the Pakistani government-supported Basic Health Units. Little attention is paid to gender-based violence in camps and urban settings. UNHCR has noted a gap in the number of girls in the newer refugee camps established two years ago in Baluchistan and the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). It is not clear why there is a gap, but some UNHCR staff speculate that girl children may have higher mortality rates than boy children because

---

<sup>1</sup> Meeting with Protection Unit, UNHCR Islamabad November 11, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance, an affiliate of the Aga Khan Development Network.

boys are valued more by Afghan families. This issue deserves further study and data collection.

While UNHCR has started to reach out to the urban population through a series of legal clinics, there is a host of urgent problems facing Afghan women, children and adolescents that are not being addressed by UNHCR, the government or NGOs. For example, closure or partial closure of urban settlements such as Nasir Bagh and Kacha Gari is forcing refugees to find alternative housing in town, although many cannot afford to pay the rent. An NGO in Islamabad reports that Afghan women resort to begging and prostitution when they have no other options. The NGO said Pakistani authorities use prisons and police stations to “protect” women from domestic violence or punish them for prostitution. Afghan street children, mostly adolescents, continue to pick garbage and beg in the streets for money and food and some disappear at night, possibly picked up for the drug trade or prostitution.

There are also reports that families have left older children behind when returning to Afghanistan. UNHCR staff cross-checked voluntary repatriation information with refugee status determination (RSD) databases for Islamabad/Rawalpindi, a mainly urban caseload, and found that at least 30 percent of repatriating families left teenage children – brothers and sisters – in Pakistan.

### **III. Afghanistan**

#### ***Kabul***

In Kabul, improvements in the local economy and security are evident. The city is much cleaner than it was five months ago, with less refuse on side streets. The increased number of vehicles is causing traffic jams. There are many more international organizations present, but security problems are still a paramount concern.

Afghan women express relief and delight in their newfound freedoms, although some say they will continue to wear the *burqa*, as it offers some measure of protection when they are outdoors and in the markets. One woman who returned from exile noted that when she first came back she was uncomfortable wearing a veil and no *burqa* because many people stared at her. After a few months she noted that more women were without the *burqa* and she was no longer the subject of stares.

Local women’s groups continue to register with the Afghan government and operate openly in Kabul and other cities. Donors – bilateral, multi-lateral and private – are providing direct support to many women’s groups. (See appendix 1 for a list of donors.) The Afghan Women’s Network (AWN) serves as a liaison between donors, women’s groups, the Afghan government and assistance agencies to promote awareness and advocate for the needs and rights of women and children. This includes training government staff on gender awareness and sensitivity. The AWN is also working to improve collaboration and communication among women’s NGOs that run schools,

programs in literacy, health and income generation around the city. Membership is open to groups and individuals (around 800 women, with 150 new applicants as of September 2002) who are lawyers, doctors, housewives and teachers. Members use AWN services such as computers and internet café; some receive training and scholarships for career advancement. The AWN represents many of the women's NGOs based in Kabul and also has an office and activities in Peshawar for its members in Pakistan.

Income generation remains a problem for Afghans in Kabul. The Women's Commission interviewed families that returned from Iran three months ago. Male heads of household said they could not find work and if they could not work they would return to Iran, leaving their wives and children behind in Kabul.

Widows and women heads of household continue to suffer disproportionately, as it is difficult to find employment and women remain less likely to operate in the public sphere, even in the capital city of Kabul. One woman, a mother of four whose husband was killed by the Taliban, visited the Ministry for Women's Affairs hoping someone at the Ministry would help her find work. When she first became a widow she received help from a brother living in Denmark, but he wrote to her recently telling her he no longer had a job and could not support her. In the Ministry offices, she was in tears, saying, "No one helps me, just God. I don't know how I will support myself and my children. When my children ask, what kind of food did you cook for us, I can't answer them. It is better for me to die."<sup>3</sup>

The deputy Minister for Women's Affairs, Tajiwar Kakar, noted that hundreds of widows come to the ministry offices every week, desperate to find jobs or financial assistance in order to survive. Other women visit the ministry to take part in classes being offered there, including computer and literacy programs.

### Ministry of Women's Affairs

When Afghanistan's new government was organized in December 2000, one major step was the creation of the Ministry for Women's Affairs (MOWA). The Minister for Women's Affairs, Habiba Sarabi, was in exile in Pakistan for many years where she directed the NGO Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan. Minister Sarabi told the Women's Commission that MOWA hopes to establish women's centers in every province in Afghanistan. In Kabul there are 12 centers providing literacy, vocational training, health and counselling services; MOWA plans to establish 16 in the city.

A vocational training school sits on the grounds of the ministry itself along with a tailoring project for 200 women, an office for widows that referred them to other ministries for jobs, classes in fine arts and painting, and a resource center. MOWA also plans to open a shelter for women in Kabul.

During a meeting with the Women's Commission, Minister Sarabi observed:

---

<sup>3</sup> Women's Commission interview, Kabul November 11, 2002.

“There have been big changes here. Girls can go to school and women may serve in the Cabinet and women can speak out. During the Loya Jirga (grand council) women could speak out.

“But of course we still have problems -- cultural and traditional barriers, especially in rural areas. After the war the fundamentalists imposed their ideas on Afghan people, keeping women inside and keeping them only at home. The biggest problem for us is that it takes time and it isn't easy. We can't change it very quickly. It is hard work.”<sup>4</sup>

Minister Sarabi maintained that she was satisfied with the work other government ministries were doing to promote women's rights and needs, but she noted that in the provinces, where warlords rule, many problems still exist. She said MOWA would be working to ensure that women's rights were protected by the Constitution. Minister Sarabi called on her government to take a strict policy against violence and war and to spend more on education for all Afghans, including boys but especially girls. She emphasized that the Women's Ministry “is an important symbol for women worldwide.”

The Minister noted that her office collaborated with women's NGOs and maintained an open-door policy with international NGOs, welcoming other interested groups to future partnership.

Some critics, both international staff and Afghan women leaders, contend that MOWA should not run vocational skills training and literacy programs, but should address policy issues instead. “Why do we have a Ministry for Women?” asked one Afghan woman leader. “Why don't we have women's advocates in every Ministry to make sure that the Ministry for Justice and the Ministry for Labor is promoting women's rights? Do western countries have a Ministry for Women?”

Some experts argue that the ministry should act less like a service provider and nongovernmental organization and should devote more time to policy analysis and recommendations for the central government.<sup>5</sup> This is difficult for the ministry given its lack of trained personnel and experience in governance.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) acts as an adviser to the ministry and has assigned full-time staff to assist the ministry in developing its strategic plan and work with donors. In addition, MOWA has received support from: the U.S. Agency for International Development; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), a German government-owned corporation for international development and assistance; the government of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs; as well as other government and private donors.

---

<sup>4</sup> Women's Commission interview, Kabul November 12, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> The MOWA submission to the Afghan Ministry of Finance (February 2003): A Public Investment Programme in Advocacy and Support for the Integration of Gender into the National Development Budget (SY1382-84) is a step in the right direction.

## Non-governmental women's organizations

Afghan women have established their own organizations to provide education and job skills, including computers, tailoring and animal husbandry. Many of the women who lead these NGOs lived and worked in exile in Pakistan. Some of the largest women's NGOs are extensions of groups operating in Pakistan, including the Afghan Women's Resource Center, the Afghan Women's Welfare Department, Afghan Women's Education Center and Afghan Women's Network. A select list of Afghan women's organizations can be found in Appendix 2 at the end of this report.

Recently, UNIFEM donated funds to establish and support four new women's NGOs to work on legal issues. These are the Afghan Women Lawyers Council, Afghan Women Judges Association, Afghan Women Legal Research Association and the Afghan Women Lawyers and Professional Association. Most of the women's organizations are located in Kabul, where the donors and international organizations are located, and where more than two million people are now living.

Women's organizations face the challenge of moving beyond Kabul to other cities and especially to rural areas where human rights abuses against women and girls are the worst. In many places in Afghanistan, particularly in rural areas, it is not unusual for women and girls to be bartered, sold and enslaved. Women's groups must also address the coordination of their activities to avoid duplication of services.

Finally, while many donors are supporting women's organizations<sup>6</sup> and many are interested in continuing such support, only a small number of women's organizations are benefiting from their assistance as many women's organizations lack basic organizational knowledge, such as creating and managing a budget, writing and promoting proposals, and training staff. Such organizations have had difficulties obtaining funds and putting their ideas into practice.

Donors could assist by providing training in the areas mentioned above and coordinating their efforts to reach the maximum number of women's groups and promote a variety of programs. Many Afghan women leaders and donors told the Women's Commission they would welcome a donor coordination meeting.

The Inter-Agency Working Group on Women serves as a coordination mechanism and meets regularly at the United Nations Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) compound. The working group includes UN and government representatives, as well as international and local NGOs. They discuss issues, decide when and how to take joint action, share information and findings from their work and research.

---

<sup>6</sup> On January 8, 2003 the United States government donated \$3.5 million to support Afghan women and girls, primarily through the MOWA centers. Governments of Japan, Germany and the Netherlands are also at the forefront of supporters of Afghan women's programs. Private donors, including foundations and individuals, are also a main source of support to women's programs.

## *Herat*

### Deportees

The Women's Commission visited the western province of Herat, which borders Iran. Among the most disturbing protection issues for Afghan returnees in this area are the forced deportations by the Iranian government. Although Iran is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, it continues to deport Afghan refugees, including young boys, girls and pregnant women. Iran, which hosts approximately one million Afghan refugees, arrests Afghans on the streets and on construction sites where tens of thousands of Afghan men and boys work as day laborers. Iranian police detain them for several days and then transport them across the Afghan border. UNHCR runs a transit center in Herat city for deportees. At this center, several boys, ages 13 to 17, told the Women's Commission of abuse, including beatings, by the Iranian authorities.

Iranian authorities detain and deport women and girls as well. Many are apprehended as they walk down the street and are separated from their children and families. UNHCR identifies unaccompanied minors and works to track down their families and reunite them. Some teenage girls and young women are reluctant to give UNHCR information on their identity despite its importance for reunifying them with family members. The girls are also afraid their families will accuse them of inappropriate behaviour and that they will be beaten or killed by their fathers or brothers because the police have detained them. One community service office noted: "They will ask what was she doing to be picked up by the police. She must have been doing something wrong."<sup>7</sup>

### Internally displaced persons

There are an estimated one million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan; Herat province has an estimated 100,000 IDPs.<sup>8</sup> The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and nongovernmental organizations, together with the Afghan government, are trying to assist IDPs to return to their homes and villages. However, the extreme poverty and destruction of their homes has led many IDPs to remain in the camps. Others took the incentive package offered and returned to their villages only to turn around and go back to the IDP camps once they discovered they had very little in their villages. Some say violence and insecurity force them to abandon their homes, while others say they cannot plant their crops or find jobs. The Women's Commission met with a family in Shaiyadee camp that had returned from Ghor province two weeks earlier. The woman said, "I will never return. They will have to force me to leave this camp. There is no way to live in Ghor. Our relatives were killed. There is no security." In Maslakh, a camp that is no longer accepting new arrivals, an elderly man spoke on behalf of his family: "They will need to use the force of a gun before I leave this place. I have nowhere to go."<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Community Services Officer, UNHCR Herat, November 13, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Global IDP Database, *Western region overview (August 2002)*; <http://www.idproject.org>.

<sup>9</sup> Women's Commission interview, Shaiyadee Camp, November 14, 2002.

In Shaiyadee and Maslakh camps the Women's Commission saw severely inadequate infrastructure, including dangerously large, deep holes in front of residential blocks and small houses and shelters with only thin plastic sheeting covering windows. The weather in mid-November was already very cold (nine degrees Celsius). In Shaiyadee camp, the ICRC camp coordinator said that many IDPs who had left the camp a few months before were now returning. He had submitted winterization plans and requested materials from UNHCR several weeks before, but he was still awaiting a response. He acknowledged there are many widows in Shaiyadee, estimating five or six percent were living there without the safety of relatives and also noted this may not be reflected in the official reports, citing deficiency of previous surveys in collecting data on family size and age of members.

Survival tactics among the IDPs include early marriages and marrying second wives to help care for children. Many of the women in both camps are widows or heads of households whose husbands have left the camp for Iran or Pakistan to try to find employment. One woman said that she was caring for 12 children: six children from her husband's first wife, who had died, and her own six.

A young girl, who looked no more than 17, was caring for eight children, six from her husband's first wife who had died, and two of her own. Her husband brought her to the IDP camp and went to Pakistan to find work. She had not received any news or money from him since he left several months ago.

As a result of these difficulties, the Herat IDP camp population is beginning to return to Iran and Pakistan.

### Women's organizations

There are no independent women's groups in the province – all must have endorsement from the provincial governor, a former warlord, Ismael Khan. One international worker reported being harassed and was told to stop working with international organizations. She eventually moved from her family home to other living quarters to avoid harassment and safeguard her relatives. Another was reportedly told it was better to work with an Afghan agency supported by the governor, rather than an international organization with many male foreigners. According to a woman in a senior position at the central government in Kabul: "Khan has one face for the United Nations, one for Afghans. He is nice to the UN but not with Afghans."

The Women's Commission met with the leader of the Herat Women's Shura (council) who explained that the council was created in July 2002 because women wanted to start programs to help each other. The Shura approached Mr. Khan, who gave his endorsement and selected her to run the group.

The leader of the Shura explained the goals: "We help poor women, refugee women and women without husbands." The Shura hosts a cultural program run by a high school student named Roya Sadat, which includes drama, newspaper articles and discussion

groups. Ms. Sadat and her colleagues hope to start a youth group in Herat. In addition, she has written a script for a film and hopes to produce it someday soon.

There is no shortage of well-educated women devoted to helping rebuild Afghanistan. Shaheen Tabibi, a teacher and principal of the Raslat School for Boys and Girls, reported that half of her students are refugees who returned from Iran in the past year. The school is private, with support from Afghans living in Iran and overseas.

#### **IV. Recommendations**

##### ***Recommendations for UN agencies and the government of Afghanistan:***

- UNIFEM and the Ministry for Women's Affairs should host a donor coordination meeting, including foundation and NGO donors.
- The Ministry of Women's Affairs should deploy staff to the other Ministries, including Justice, Education, Agriculture, Health and Refugee Affairs. These staff could provide training, technical assistance and analysis on gender issues.
- Other ministries of the government of Afghanistan, in addition to MOWA, should explore and gain a better sense of women's groups and their work and seek ways to collaborate in the future.
- UNHCR should increase the monitoring of cross-border population movement between Afghanistan and Pakistan and should set up an information and assistance system for Afghans arriving on both sides of the border.
- An independent expert group should conduct a gender audit of UNAMA and of the new government of Afghanistan.
- UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNICEF and other agencies should expand their reproductive health activities across the country, and address women's broader gender-based violence needs.

##### ***Recommendations for international and local NGOs:***

- AWN should consider networking strategies that would allow donors to meet with AWN's membership. Many Afghan women's organizations have few contacts in the international community and are looking for financial support to run literacy, job training and other programs.
- Further investigations are needed on the following issues:
  - Iranian deportation of children and separation of families;
  - The sale of women and girls by families who need money;
  - The prevalence and problems of street children in Kabul and other big cities.
- Support activities of women's groups that are building expertise and support in camps on protection issues, such as the Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC) which is working with refugees on addressing domestic violence through community sensitization training, and runs a shelter program for abused women and street children.
- International agencies should improve IDP camp conditions immediately (for example, filling in deep holes and providing plastic sheeting, blankets and other shelter assistance).

- Organizations should support protection programs for children and youth, including job training and micro-enterprise opportunities, particularly urban refugee children in Pakistan and street children in Afghanistan

***Recommendations for donors:***

- Donors should consider coordinating their activities in support of Afghan women, perhaps through information sharing and lessons learned.
- Donors should support the activities of both local and international NGOs, particularly in the areas of gender-based violence prevention, access to reproductive healthcare and adolescent-focused programming.
- Donors should continue to support protection activities for refugees in Pakistan and Iran as the need is still relevant and pressing.

**Related Women's Commission Reports:**

From Refugee to Returnee: Afghan Refugees and Their Journey Home. September 2002.

Fending For Themselves: Afghan Refugee Children and Adolescents Working in Urban Pakistan. May 2002.

UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women and Guidelines on Their Protection: An Assessment of Ten Years of Implementation. May 2002.

Rights, Reconstruction and Enduring Peace: Afghan Women & Children after the Taliban. December 2001.

*Afghan Women's Organizations: Key Actors in Rebuilding Afghanistan and Assisting Refugees.* December 2001.

"We Simply Do Not Want to Die" Assessment of Protection Concerns and Case Studies of Afghan Women in New Shamshatoo Refugee Camp, Pakistan. December 2001.



# Appendices

## Appendix 1. List of Donors in Afghanistan and Pakistan

Name	Title	Company	Add1	Add2	City	State	ZIP	CTRY	Email	Tel	Fax
Craig Steffensen	Senior Programs Officer	Asian Development Bank	Chahrahi Ansari (Adjacent to District 4 Office)	P.O. Box 3070, Shahr-e-now Post Office	Kabul			AFG	csteffensen@adb.org	9320 220 0638	9320 220 0638
Aly Mawji	Resident Representative	Aga Khan Development Network			Kabul			AFG	aly.mawji@akdn.ch	873 761 839 877	873 761 839 879
		AGFUND	P.O. Box 18371	Riyadh 11415				Saudi Arabia	Projects@agfund.org	966 1 4418888	966 1 4412962
Jeremy Guthrie	Program Manager	AusAID	GPO Box 887		Canberra	ACT	2601	Australia	jeremy_guthrie@ausaid.gov.au	61 2 6206 4686	61 2 6206 4880
Alice Zaunschirm		Austria	Austrian Mission to the UN	823 United Nations Plaza, 8th Floor	New York	NY	10017	USA	alice.zaunschirm@bmaa.gv.at	212 210 9869	
Johan Debar		Government of Belgium							johan.debar@diplobel.org	32 2 519 0899	
		Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	PO Box 23350		Seattle	WA	98102		info@gatesfoundation.org		
Evan Due		Canada, DFAIT							evan.due@dfait-maeci.gc.ca	92 51 2279100	
Bev Carmichael		Canada, CIDA							beverly_carmichael@acdi-cida.gc.ca	819 994 3842	
Asila Wardak		CARE	6-Park Lane, Park Road, U/Town	UPO Box 926	Peshawar			PK	afghan@care.org	92.91.40328	
Mr Deng Xijun	Political Counsellor	China							dxijun@yahoo.com	2200490	
Tae Yoo	Vice President of Corporate Philanthropy	Cisco	170 West Tasman Dr		San Jose	CA	95134			(408)526-4000	
Dr. Matein Van Asseldonk	Country Representative Afghanistan/Pakistan	CORDAID							caritas.kabul@cordaid.amdsconnect.com	0093 022 200114	
Mr Knud Kjaer Nielson	Minister Counsellor	Denmark							knuie@um.dk	45 33 92 00 00	
Chris Austin	Western Asia Dept	United Kingdom, DFID	1 Palace Street		London			SW1E 5HE UK		44 (0) 20 7023 0584	44 (0) 20 7023 0291
		ECHO (Sippi)									
		European Commission									
Tarja Laitianinen	Ambassador	Finland							Tarja.Laitianinen@formin.fi	358 9 160 56308/56358	

M. Eric Lavertu / Eric Avetu / Jenner, Machin	Counsellor for Cooperation & Culture	France							eric.lavertn@diplomatie.gouv.fr	873 763036212	
Rainer Eberle	Ambassador	Germany							mini076@inmarsat.francetelecom.fr	93 70-276607	
Anne Lang Frahn		Global Fund for Women	1375 Sutter Street	Suite 400	San Francisco CA		94109		proposals@globalfundforwomen.org	(415) 202-7640	(415) 202-8604
		GTZ	Wazir Akbar Khan Street No. 15, House 386		Kabul			AFG	gtz-afg04@les-raisting.de, tabatabai-kabul@les-raisting.de	0093-20-23 00 389, 0093-20-23 00 390	
Mr Mukhopadhyaya Gautam	Charge d'Affaires	Government of India								873 763 095 560	
		International Rescue Committee									
		International Organization for Migration	Ansari Wat, House 1093	behind UNICA Guest House	Kabul			AFG	iom.kabul@iomkabul.net	00 873 762 869 855	
		International Organization for Migration	House No.6, 6th Avenue	Main Embassy Road, Sector G/6-4	Islamabad			PK	SROIslamabad2@iom.int	92(51) 2824 737	
Ms Joana Betson		Ireland							joana.betson@ivleas.ie		
Mr Dominico Giorgi	Ambassador	Italy							ambasciata.kabul@esteri.it	873 761 280 634, +873 761 280 638, +873 762 740 486	
Mr Kinichi Komano / Mr Takanori Jibiki / Mr Yasushi Fujii / Mr Shoji Hasegawa	Ambassador / Resident Representative, JICA // Advisor	Japan							ejkabul@vc.kcom.ne.jp / jibiki.takanori@jica.go.jp / ejkabul@vc.kcom.ne.jp	+873 762 854 518 / +873 761 218 271 / +93 70 277 146	
Mr Leo Faber		Luxembourg							leo.faber@mae.etat.lu	(352 ) 478-2457	
		Norwegian Church Aid			Oslo			Norway	nca-oslo@nca.no		
Mr Joris Beerda / Adriaan Kooijmans	Deputy Head of Mission	Netherlands							buzakabul2@euronet.nl	070-279666	
Mr Bjorn Johannessen	Charge d'affaires	Royal Norwegian Embassy							emb.kabul@mfa.no	070274531, +873 762 596 925	
Meryem Aslan	Programme Officer For Central Asia	NOVIB	Mauritskade 9, P.O. Box 30919		2500 GX The Hague			The Netherlands	meryem_aslan@yahoo.co.uk, meryem.aslan@novib.nl	31-(0)70 342 18 99; FAX +31(0)70 361 44 61	

		Qatar Charitable Society											
Lauryn Oates		Rights & Democracy	Intl Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development	1001 de Maisonneuve Blvd. East, Suite 1100	Montreal	Quebec		Canada	ichrdd@ichrdd.ca www.ichrdd.ca	514 283 6073	514 283 3792		
Jasmine Nahhas di Florio		Rockefeller Foundation	215 W. 84 Street, #610		New York	NY	10024	USA	nahhasdiflorio@aol.com				
Adam Friedman	Disaster Relief, International Support	Rotary Foundation	One Rotary Center	1560 Sherman Avenue	Evanston	IL	60201		friedmaa@rotaryintl.org	847-866-4487			
Mr Vladimir Ivanenko	Charge d'affaires	Russian Federation								00870763006654			
Abdullah F. Al Kanthani	Charges d'affaires	Saudi Arabia								0212100167, 070255555			
Rukhsana Sarwar		Save the Children Fund	P.O. Box: 1952	14B St 61 F-7/4	Islamabad			PK	pafo%scus@sdnpk.undp.org	92 51-821829; 92 51 279212			
Ana Jimenez	Spanish Rep to the UN	Spain							ajimenez@spainun.org				
Jorgen Persson	SIDA	Sweden							Jorgen.persson@sida.se	070280555			
		Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation (DEZA)	Embassy of Switzerland, P.O. Box 1073	Street 6, Diplomatic Enclave	Islamabad			G-5/4	PK	islamabad@sdc.net	009251 - 2279280	009251 - 2826 484	
		Swiss Peace Foundation	Sonnenbergstrasse 17	Postfach	Bern	7		CH - 3000	Suisse	info@swisspeace.ch	41 (0)31 330 12 12	41 (0)31 330 12 13	
Mr Matthias Anderegg	Assistant Programme Coordinator	Switzerland								93 702 74 902, +873 762 71 80 80			
Mr. Mujit Ozder / Mr. Tuncer	Ambassador / Deputy Chief of Mission	Turkey								2101581 / 070280028, +873 761 864 426			
Umer Daudzai	Asst. Resident Representative	UNDP	H-293, St. 55	F-10/4	Islamabad				PK	umer.daudzai@undp.org	92-51-221-451/55	9251-221-450	
UNFPA Representative		UNFPA	P.O. Box 1051		Islamabad				PK				
		UNICEF	6 & 7 Floor, Saudi Pak Tower	Blue Area, Jinnah Avenue	Islamabad				PK	generic-isl@unicef.org.pk	92 (0)51 2800133	92 (0)51 2800132	
Gule Afruz Mahbub	UNIFEM Programme Advisor for Afghanistan	UNIFEM	c/o UNDP	H-293, St. 55, F-10/4	Islamabad				PK		92-51-221-451	92-51-221-450	

Dr Ann Freckleton	Head of Office	United Kingdom	British Embassy						britishmbassykabul@gtnet.gov.uk	+873 762 280 331/498 542, AWCC: +93 70 277 652 / 070274778
Craig Buck	Director	USAID							kabulusaid@state.gov	+873 762 311 955 or +46 73004 4633
WHO Representative		WHO	Street No.13	Wazir Abkar Khan (near Pakistan Embassy)	Kabul			AFG	PIO@emro.who.int	
Bill Byrd	Country Director	World Bank							Wbyrd@worldbank.org	070279182

**Appendix 2. Select List of Afghan Women's Organizations**

Agency	Date Established	Contact Person	Contact Details	Main Activities
Afghan Women's Foundation		Shafiq Malikzai	92 91 264543, email to be supplied	Details to be supplied
Afghan Women's Network (AWN)	1996	Afifa Azim	92 91 40436, awn@brain.net.pk	Networking body for Afghan women, training provision
Health and Development Centre for Afghan Women		Qudsia Majeedyar	92 91 812363, email TBA	Schools, income generation for urban refugees of Peshawar
Rawzana		Mahbooba Huquqmal	92 91 812553, rawzana001@yahoo.com	Awareness raising on women's rights and legal advice provision
Afghan Women's Resource Centre (AWRC)	1987	Partawmina Hashemi	awrc@brain.net.pk, 92 91 8403111; 070280179; Qalai Fatullah St#2 H#221. Kabul	Health, education/literacy, income generation, relief work. Member of AWN
Afghan Women's Welfare Department (AWWD)		Jamila Akbarzai	awwd@brain.net.pk, 92 91 843 497, 070282494; Qalai Fatullah, St#1, H#25, Kabul	Income generation, education, health, AWN member
Malalai Community Forum		Ms. Malalai	Chailston Waisalabad, oppositye fo Jam-l- Mosque, Kabul	Member of AWN, in AFG during Taliban
Afghan Women's Educational Centre (AWEC)	early 1990s	Palwasha Hassan	irfan@pes.comsats.net.pk, +92 91 841917	Counselling (trauma and other), education, some relief work
Rabia Balkhi		Rahila	tel 070281308; Khoja Boghara (Rahila works in UN Abitatt), Kabul	literacy courses, AWN member
Asia Women		Shukria Dawid	tel. 070281845; Wazir Akbar Khan, St#12 H#221, Kabul	AWN Member, in AFG during Taliban
Women's English Language Programme		Qamar Homam	Welp@welp.every1.net, 92 91 41196	English language teaching
Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL)	1995	Sakena Yacoobi	www.creativehope.org, sakenay@aol.com, sakenay@brain.net.pk, +1 212 271 6213; H#387 St#3 Kart-I-Parwan, behind cinema Barhastan near the Ahmad Shah	Health, education, awareness raising on rights, member of AWN

			Masoods brother's house, kabul	
Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)	1970s	Various	www.rawa.org, rawa@rawa.org, 92 300 855 1638	Advocacy, some relief work
Shuhada Organisation	1989	Dr. Sima Samar	www.shuhada.org, simas@brain.net.pk, 92 81 834781, Kart-e-Say, Guolai Puole Surkh Masjeed I Omara Khan Street, Kabul	Health, education, relief
Afghan Women Judges Association (AWJA)	2003	Huma Alizoi	Kabul, Afghanistan	Aims to ensure the active participation of female judges and lawyers in the judicial system, as well as to promote quality and reliable legal advice for vulnerable Afghan women countrywide; training 100 women Judges and Lawyers in different laws of the country so that they may actively participate in the judicial reform of the country
Afghan Women Legal Research Association			Kabul, Afghanistan	
Afghan Women Lawyers & Professional Association	1998	Soraya Paikan	Kabul, Afghanistan	Educating women of their legal rights & how these rights compare to international standards. Establishing a resource center where citizens can examine differences among Afghan, Islamic and international law.
Afghan Women Lawyer's Council			Kabul, Afghanistan	
Afghan Women's Council	1993	Fatana Gailani		Advocacy, education, health, some relief work
Womens Development Program for Afghanistan		Dr. Kursheed Sayeed	Flat #4, Plat #51, Jani's Plaza, Khyber Super Market, Qayum Stadium Road, Peshawar	Income generation in Chitral, education, some relief work

2001.

"We Simply Do Not Want to Die" Assessment of Protection Concerns and Case Studies of Afghan Women in New Shamshatoo Refugee Camp, Pakistan. December 2001.

sense of women's groups and their work and seek ways to collaborate in the future.

4. UNHCR should increase the monitoring of cross-border population movement between Afghanistan and Pakistan and should set up an information and assistance system for Afghans arriving on both sides of the border.

5. An independent expert group should conduct a gender audit of UNAMA and of the new government of Afghanistan.

6. UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNICEF and other agencies should expand their reproductive health activities across the country, and address women's broader gender-based violence needs.

***Recommendations for international and local NGOs:***

1. The Afghan Women's Network (AWN) should consider networking strategies that would allow donors to meet with AWN's membership. Many Afghan women's organizations have few contacts in the international community and are looking for financial support to run literacy, job training and other programs.

2. Further investigations are needed on the following issues:

- Iranian deportation of children and separation of families;
- The sale of women and girls by families who need money;
- The prevalence and problems of street children in Kabul and other big cities.

3. Support activities of women's groups that are building expertise and support in camps on protection issues, such as the Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC) which is working with refugees on addressing domestic violence through community sensitization training, and runs a shelter program for abused women and street children.

4. International agencies should improve IDP camp conditions immediately (for example, filling in deep holes and providing plastic sheeting, blankets and other shelter assistance).

5. Organizations should support protection programs for children and youth, including job training and micro-enterprise opportunities, particularly urban refugee children in Pakistan and street children in Afghanistan

***Recommendations for donors:***

1. Donors should consider coordinating their activities in support of Afghan women, perhaps through information sharing and lessons learned.

2. Donors should support the activities of both local and international NGOs, particularly in the areas of gender-based violence prevention, access to reproductive healthcare and adolescent-focused programming.

3. Donors should continue to support protection activities for refugees in Pakistan and Iran as the need is still relevant and pressing.

**FULL REPORT AVAILABLE AT:**

[www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org)

**Related Women's Commission Reports available at ([www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org)):**

From Refugee to Returnee: [Afghan Refugees and Their Journey Home](#). September 2002.

Fending For Themselves: [Afghan Refugee Children and Adolescents Working in Urban Pakistan](#). May 2002.

UNHCR Policy on [Refugee Women and Guidelines on Their Protection: An Assessment of Ten Years of Implementation](#). May 2002.

Rights, Reconstruction and Enduring Peace: [Afghan Women & Children after the Taliban](#). December 2001.

"Afghan Women's Organizations: Key Actors in Rebuilding Afghanistan and Assisting Refugees." December

## Afghanistan

### FULL REPORT AVAILABLE AT:

[www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org)

### OVERVIEW

This report summarizes findings from the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children's (Women's Commission) mission to Islamabad and Peshawar, Pakistan, Kabul and Herat, Afghanistan, and includes recommendations for action. The Women's Commission's work in the region includes three components:

1. Afghan Women's Fund: this fund provides small grants to Afghan women's organizations for projects promoting the rights of women and girls, including access to healthcare, education and employment opportunities.
2. Reproductive Health for Refugees: this project works to improve refugees' access to family planning, emergency obstetrics, services to prevent and treat rape, gender-based violence (GBV) and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.
3. Monitoring and reporting of protection issues for women, girls and boys.

Millions of Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban, and millions more are still on the move. Violence and factional fighting, food insecurity and lack of shelter and employment are some of the reasons Afghans in Pakistan said they did not plan to return to Afghanistan in the near future. Within Afghanistan, internally displaced people (IDPs) are crowding into Kabul and other cities, trying to find jobs and shelter because their rural communities cannot support them. In western Afghanistan, boys aged 12-17 are attempting to cross the border into Iran in search of employment. Many Afghans are making plans to return to Pakistan or Iran, saying they have no jobs and no way to support their families. They will leave wives and children behind in overcrowded homes in Kabul or in remote camps and settlements. Meanwhile, Iran and Pakistan continue to deport refugees, including children, pregnant women and men who are heads of households, splitting up families and subjecting them to fear and abuse.

At the same time, Afghanistan is experiencing profound changes. In Kabul and other urban areas, women are once again taking charge of their lives. They are enrolled in literacy courses, computer training and English language programs. Many women have found jobs and feel free to go to market and to the mosque. Girls are enrolled in school. However, there are many women and girls who do not have freedom of movement, who continue to suffer abuse and are deprived of shelter, food and income. Gender violence is pervasive; girls are forced to marry in their teens, and in rural areas where local customs prevail, girls may be bartered and sold, or captured as war booty.

A number of vibrant women's organizations are running literacy, computer, skills training and other programs and are coordinating their activities through the Afghan Women's Network. The Ministry for Women's Affairs (MOWA) has developed a plan of action that includes establishing women's centers in each of the country's 32 provinces. Many international donors are supporting programs to improve the lives of women and girls and advance their rights. However, there is very little coordination of these activities and many donors are providing grants to the same set of organizations. This is logical as this group of women's organizations has a proven track record. But new groups, as well as groups which operated secretly throughout the Taliban era, are easily overlooked when they should be nurtured and developed.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### ***Recommendations for UN agencies and the government of Afghanistan:***

1. UNIFEM and the Ministry for Women's Affairs should host a donor coordination meeting, including foundation and NGO donors.
2. The Ministry of Women's Affairs should deploy staff to the other Ministries, including Justice, Education, Agriculture, Health and Refugee Affairs. These staff could provide training, technical assistance and analysis on gender issues.
3. Other ministries of the government of Afghanistan, in addition to MOWA, should explore and gain a better

**aric**

**From:** "Sarah Spencer" <sarahs@womenscommission.org>  
**To:** <pakpe@unhcr.ch>; <womensco@pes.co>; <fariha@netzone.net.pk>; <akbatur@unhcr.ch>; <actionr@jonction.net>; <alis@unhcr.ch>; <ally@unhcr.ch>; <rina\_amiri@harvard.edu>; <assebe@unhcr.ch>; <affaazim@hotmail.com>; <obakhet@undp.org>; <jballantyne@usaid.gov>; <sneha.barot@crfp.org>; <BennettVL@state.gov>; <ayseberlaltiner@hotmail.com>; <bessler@un.org>; <tbien-aime@equalitynow.org>; <bokharf@hrw.org>; "Afghanistan Odd Bratellie" <oddb@their.org>; <michelleb@refintl.org>; <castel@unhcr.ch>; <demante@unhcr.ch>; <aric@brain.net.pk>; <maryam.elahi@trincoll.edu>; <Bridget\_Elias@moma.org>; <mustafa@irc-pk.org>; <mgengman@ccfusa.org>; <lunae@vday.org>; <p-evans@dfid.gov.uk>; <feller@unhcr.ch>; <egf@wcc-coe.org>; <fischmanh@lchr.org>; <gaertner@state.gov>; <92jill@hotmail.com>; <ngattsek@feminist.org>; <kabultec@erols.com>; <palwasha@nucleus.com>; <herrmann@unhcr.ch>; <T.HIGASHI@FORDFOUND.ORG>; <felicity.hill@undp.org>; <welp@welp.every1.net>; <elizabeth@irc-pk.org>; <Kathleen.hunt@planetmail.com>; <aina.iyambo@undp.org>; <davidleejackman@hotmail.com>; <indira@peacewomen.org>; <mariam@pcfo.irc-pk.org>; <daw@un.org>; <beatrice.maille@dfait-maeci.gc.ca>; <hdca94@hotmail.com>; <martinsf@gunet.georgetown.edu>; <emartinez@care.org>; <mathiar@usa.redcross.org>; <yunas@unhcr.ch>; <ircherat@uuplus.com>; <nbgmm@worldnet.att.net>; <morrih@unhcr.ch>; <nahhasdiflorio@aol.com>; <jneuwith@equalitynow.org>; <pakpe@unhcr.ch>; <palmerleeAW@state.gov>; <parkera@hrw.org>; <penguinrer@yahoo.com>; <h.reitz@state.gov>; <faye.richardson@att.net>; <cshimony@ajws.org>; <theriaul@unhcr.ch>; <ariana@undpafg.org.pk>; <cha@salmwq.pwr.sd.npk.undp.org>; <asila-wardak@usa.net>; <care\_asila@yahoo.com>; <care\_asila@yahoo.com>; <jwhitaker@cf.org>; <ewisch@unicef.org>; <gwolfensohn@albmail.com>; <fjustinew@yahoo.com>; <meng@mertzgilmore.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2003 12:48 AM  
**Attach:** WCRWC 3-2003 Trip report, external.doc  
**Subject:** Report on Women's Commission Mission to Afghanistan and Pakistan

Apologies in advance for the cross-posting.

Attached, please find a copy of the Women's Commission recent report on a mission visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan in November. Further details are summarized below. Please feel free to distribute this report widely and to comment on the report.

Warmest regards,  
 Sarah Spencer

<<WCRWC 3-2003 Trip report, external.doc>>

Sarah W. Spencer  
 Program Specialist  
 Women's Commission for Refugee Women & Children  
 122 East 42nd Street, 12th Floor  
 New York, NY 10168-1289 USA  
 tel. 212.551.3140 fax. 212.551.3180  
 email. sarahs@womenscommission.org  
 www.womenscommission.org



**Emerging Challenges: Closing Gaps in the Protection of Afghan Women and Girls**  
**A Report on the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children's Mission to Pakistan and**

3/27/2003