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Taliban Bans Beauty Salons: Women Resist

In early July, the Taliban ordered all beauty salons in Afghanistan to shut down within a month and submit a report of their closing. The reason for the mandatory closing of all beauty salons is not clear, but the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice state that it is because "makeovers" place a financial burden on poor families. Women in Kabul have since taken to the streets to express their dissent of this ruling and advocate for themselves and all women in Afghanistan, chanting "Women, Food, Freedom."

August will mark two years since the withdrawal of all U.S. and NATO troops marking the end of the 20 year invasion of Afghanistan. The Taliban had stated that they would adopt more moderate rulings for women in the country once the war ended, but that has been far from true. Earlier this month, women's beauty parlors were ordered to shut down as they are now banned from operating. This ruling comes with no explanation and a spokesman from the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice stated that once the salons are closed then a reason will be given.

Women in Afghanistan have had their rights stripped day by day. They cannot attend high school or university, go to the park, attend the gym, or work for the United Nations and other NGOs. The shutdown of beauty parlors is the latest crackdown on activities that pertain to women. It is important to note that this is a shutdown of women's beauty parlors only, not barber shops or places for men. These parlors are often run entirely by women and are a major financial source for them, as they are banned from seeking other forms of employment or furthering their education. This is also a banning of a large social gathering for women. Outside of the home, women do not have many options to gather and spend time with each other. The banning of beauty parlors is not only a financial hit but a social one.

The women in Afghanistan have taken a stand against this latest ban that targets their lives and overall happiness. In Kabul, dozens of women have taken to the streets to march and express their rejection of the ban. One woman carried a sign saying "Don't take my bread and water," showing that these women see the ban as a robbery of their livelihood. Public protests are often rare in Afghanistan, especially by women, as they are quickly (and sometimes violently) forced to disperse by the security forces. This did not deter these women. Many stated that they want work, food, and freedom.

Since the withdrawal, the international community has forgotten about Afghan women and girls. The United Nations has labeled Afghanistan as a gender apartheid, making it one of the worst places in the world for women and girls. As more time passes with no action, more rights are stripped. It is 2023 and women and girls are being pushed away from the public eye. Girls cannot get an education, seek employment, or even go to a hair salon. Afghan women are fighting for their rights, and they should not have to do so alone. These current events are a direct result of the United States and NATO-backed invasion, and all of these countries should be working tremendously to end this crisis. The international community must condemn the actions of the Taliban and pay more attention to women in Afghanistan to ensure that they are being protected. We at Politics4Her stand with the brave women of Afghanistan and demand that they have their own work, their own food, and most importantly, their freedom.

#LeaveNoOneBehind

#GenderApartheid

#WomenFoodFreedom

#StandWithAfghanWomen