



C/2023/449

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The crackdown on the right to education and education rights activists in Afghanistan, including the case of Matiullah Wesa

European Parliament resolution of 20 April 2023 on the crackdown on the right to education and education rights activists in Afghanistan, including the case of Matiullah Wesa (2023/2648(RSP))

(C/2023/449)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan,
 - having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Afghan education activist Matiullah Wesa, the head of the PenPath organisation, was arrested alongside several of his family members by the Taliban regime on 27 March 2023 and remains detained without access to his family or the ability to challenge the legality of his detention;
- B. whereas women and girls have faced gender-based persecution and growing restrictions on their fundamental rights since the Taliban takeover, especially concerning their education, freedom of movement and right to work; whereas women have been virtually erased from all areas of public life;
- C. whereas the Taliban plans to revise the national curriculum to replace modern secular education with religious teachings and develop a nation-wide network of religious schools; whereas Afghanistan is now the only country in the world that refuses to allow women and girls to be educated beyond primary level;
1. Calls on Afghanistan's de facto authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Matiullah Wesa and all those imprisoned for exercising their fundamental rights from detention; demands that their rights be respected, including their access to family members and legal representation;
 2. Calls on the European External Action Service and the Member States to exert diplomatic pressure directly or indirectly on Afghanistan's de facto authorities to secure the release of Matiullah Wesa and other arbitrarily detained activists, including Rasul Abdi Parsi, Noorayel Kaliwal and Mortaza Behboudi;
 3. Deplores the gender-based persecution and dramatic rollback of women's rights in Afghanistan; denounces the ban on secondary and university education, and on women working at non-governmental organisations and the UN; expresses its solidarity with Afghan women and girls, and those risking their safety to provide education;
 4. Calls on Afghanistan's de facto authorities to fully respect the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls and restore their full, equal and meaningful participation in public life;
 5. Urges Afghanistan's de facto authorities to fulfil their own pledge and restore girls' and women's equal access to education; highlights the need to provide education to all Afghans in line with international standards;
 6. Calls for the EU and the Member States to increase support to Afghan groups providing education to women and girls, including through alternative education options, and to fund specific assistance programmes both online and via community education;
 7. Insists on maintaining strict, conditional engagement with the Taliban based on the five benchmarks set by the Council for engaging with the de facto authorities and by holding the perpetrators of these grave violations of girls' and women's rights accountable, including through restrictive measures;

8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan and commit to renewing and strengthening his mandate;
 9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the United Nations.
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