"Our dreams were shattered": Afghan women reflect on 2 years of Taliban rule

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<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/afghanistan-withdrawal-taliban-women-us/>

The Taliban marked the second anniversary of their return to power in Afghanistan on Tuesday, and celebrated what the Islamic regime said was a day of victory over the United States and its allies with a public holiday.

Two years after the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan and the subsequent collapse of the democratically elected Afghan government allowed the Taliban to seize power in Kabul, the current regime have set their sights on establishing an "Islamic government" and implementing their harsh interpretation of Sharia law in the country.

For the [women of Afghanistan](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/taliban-rule-women-afghanistan/), the consequences have been severe, and their futures have been left uncertain.

Since returning to power, the Taliban have introduced several severe restrictions on women's and girls' rights and freedom, including closing schools and universities, limiting employment opportunities, preventing women from sports and parks, and recently closing all female-owned beauty salons.

For 18-year old Fatima, who was in 10th grade and was preparing for a university entrance exam, Aug. 15 was the last day she attended school.

"August 15th for me, and for Afghan girls is a day where our dreams were shattered," Fatima, who now attends sewing classes in Kabul, told CBS News.

"My only wish was to become a doctor. But they buried my dream to the ground by closing our school doors," she said.

Fatima last saw her classmates two years ago.

"I miss my friends; I miss the days we went to school together. I miss every second I spent at school," she told CBS News over the phone.

Nazanin, a 26-year-old medical studies student, spends her time at home. She has been taking anti-depressant medication ever since being barred from going to university by the Taliban.

Before the fall of Kabul, Nazanin spent most of her time reading books and listening to music and was a "full of life and entertaining person," her mother told CBS News.

"We are ready to sell everything we have and leave this country for the sake of my children so they can pursue their education," her mother said over the phone.

Despite the harsh restrictions imposed by the regime, Afghan women have still been protesting.

A statement, sent to CBS News by protesting women inside and outside Afghanistan, called for the international community to hold the Taliban accountable.

"We believe the ongoing Afghanistan disaster will cross borders sooner or later and sink the world down into terrorism. Therefore, we want the United Nations, the international community, and especially countries that follow a feminist foreign policy, to stop supporting and cooperating with the Taliban and stand by the women and democratic forces of Afghanistan," the statement from a group known only as the protesting women of Afghanistan said.

**International reaction**

Earlier this week, 10 human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, condemned the Taliban's ongoing suppression of women and girls' rights in a joint statement.

"Two years after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan on August 15, 2021, we strongly condemn ongoing and escalating gross human rights violations by the Taliban especially against women and girls and the lack of an effective response from the international community," the statement said.

"Over the past two years, the Taliban have imposed increasingly abusive policies especially against women and girls... [and imposed] policies that ban and restrict women and girls from education, work, and other livelihood opportunities, free movement and access to public spaces."

Amina Mohammed, deputy secretary-general of the United Nations, [said Monday on Twitter](https://twitter.com/AminaJMohammed/status/1691243304367927297) that the women of Afghanistan should not be forgotten.

"It's been two years since the Taliban took over in Afghanistan. Two years that upturned the lives of Afghan women and girls, their rights, and future," Mohammed said.

"We can't forget the people of Afghanistan. We must amplify their voices in the fight for their rights to education and work."