

# URGENT ACTION

## STOP PUNISHING WOMEN PROTESTERS

Since the Taliban returned to power in August 2021, women protesting Taliban's draconian policies have been forcibly disappeared, arbitrarily arrested, and detained and subjected to torture and other ill treatment. Manizha Seddiqi, a women human rights defender, was forcibly disappeared on October 9, 2023, and later found in Taliban custody. She was sent to prison on December 5, 2023. She does not have access to lawyers or regular family visits while in prison and is at risk of torture and other ill treatment. She has not been charged with any offenses. Manizha Seddiqi must be released immediately and unconditionally.

### TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Second Urgent Action 112.23**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

**Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq**  
**Director of Intelligence**  
General Directorate of Intelligence  
Chaharahi Zanbaq  
Kabul, Afghanistan  
Email: [info@mfa.gov.af](mailto:info@mfa.gov.af)

**No Domestic Postal Address**  
Email: [info@mfa.gov.af](mailto:info@mfa.gov.af)  
Twitter/X: [@MoFA\\_Afg](https://twitter.com/MoFA_Afg)

Note: There is no physical address available for this UA, so please take action through social media and email

Dear Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq,

I am concerned over the arbitrary arrest and detention of prominent woman human rights defender, **Manizha Seddiqi**, in Afghanistan. She has been arbitrarily detained simply for exercising her rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Manizha Seddiqi, also a member of the Spontaneous Movement of Afghan Women, was forcibly disappeared on October 9, 2023, and found weeks later in the custody of the Taliban. She was sent to Pule-Charkhi prison in Kabul on December 5, 2023.

Amnesty International's findings indicate that Manizha Seddiqi has been deprived of family visits, lacks access to lawyers and medical care, and her health is deteriorating. I am also deeply concerned that she is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. Between January 2022 and July 2023, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported that half of the 1,600 human rights violations in Taliban prisons involved torture or other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment. Additionally, people are often detained in undignified conditions and without access to the necessary medical care.

I call on you to immediately and unconditionally release Manizha Seddiqi. Pending her release, I call on you to ensure that her detention conditions meet international standards, and that she is provided with access to lawyers and medical care, and family visits.

Yours sincerely,

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Manizha Seddiqi** was forcibly disappeared on October 9, 2023, and later found in the Taliban's custody. It is reported that Manizha Seddiqi was then sent to Pul-e-Charkhi prison in Kabul on December 5, 2023. Reports suggest that without access to medical care, her health condition is deteriorating.

Around the same time Manizha Seddiqi was disappeared and then detained, the Taliban arbitrarily arrested and detained three prominent women human rights defenders, namely **Parisa Azada**, **Neda Parwani**, and **Zholia Parsi**, between September and November 2023. These women human rights defenders did not have access to lawyers or regular family visits while in detention and were not charged with any offenses. They were subsequently released; however, Manizha Seddiqi remains in prison until this day.

Since taking control of Kabul in August 2021, [the Taliban de facto authorities have increasingly violated the rights of women and girls](#), prohibiting their political participation and involvement in public life. The policies adopted by the Taliban de facto authorities have curtailed the rights to freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, as well as the rights to equality and non-discrimination. Despite this, women have led peaceful protests against the Taliban in various Afghan cities, including Kabul, Faizabad, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif.

Women organizing or participating in those protests have been subjected to unlawful use of force, arbitrary arrests, and detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, and other forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. In August 2023, at least eight members of the Women's National Unity and Solidarity Movement were arrested and detained for several hours because they were organizing protests. During protests, women protesters are subjected to verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation, and threats by armed Taliban agents, who greatly outnumber the protesters and routinely destroy or confiscate banners, leaflets, and other information materials of the protesters. Additionally, some journalists reporting on these protests have been subject to arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment.

The Taliban de facto authorities have also followed women post-protests to arrest them. Several women have been arrested at gunpoint in their homes or in safe houses, often violently. Some of the women's male relatives have also been severely beaten by Taliban actors at the time of the arrests. Women arrested have been detained incommunicado and repeatedly subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** English, Dari/Farsi/Pashto, or your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** May 2, 2024

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Manizha Seddiqi (she / her)