

Since 2021, the Taliban (Afghan facto authorities) have exercised upon women hard power over women to control and enforce rules to ban them from exercising their fundamental rights and freedoms, such as education and employment. Reports in 2023 indicate that **“The human rights situation in Afghanistan continued to deteriorate in 2023 as the Taliban committed widespread human rights violations, particularly against women and girls. (Afghanistan, 2024b.)** This use of hard power relies on the use of coercive resources, control of territory, media, and strategic influence through the ultra-conservative Sunni interpretation of Islam, which constitutes a denial of the justice system, fundamentally undermining international principles of right and justice in the region.

The Taliban authorities have issued regulations forbidding women from traveling or leaving their houses without being accompanied by a male chaperone. In August 2023, the Taliban refused 63 women to travel to the UAE to accept their scholarships given by Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor which expressed his disappointment on X, stating: **“I am unable to express the disappointment I feel now as The Afghan female students, whom I had provided an educational scholarship in collaboration with the @uniofdubai presented by Dr. Eesa Al Bastaki @ebastaki, were unfortunately unable to reach #DubaiAirport this morning to continue their studies due to the Taliban’s interference.”** The Taliban authorities enforced hard power by having control of the territory border (the airport) to deny women the right to leave the country. A student stated: **“Laila said she and the other women made it to their departure gate but were turned away at the last moment by men in airport uniforms who said they had an order that those with student visas were not allowed to leave the country.”** (Jazeera, 2023b) This is an example of state enforcement agents physically enforcing the law, which is a result of the immediate efficacy of these restrictions. The exercise of the Taliban's power is also a symbolic act that reinforces their social structure based on their religion and laws. Based on Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this has been an injustice for women and girls since they should be able to exercise their fundamental rights to study and travel.

Furthermore, the Taliban Authorities have also made arbitrary arrests and detentions of women and girls over their dress code. In May 2022, the Taliban ordered all women to wear a chadari, which covers them completely, and made relatives also enforce this ban. The UN published a press release on the topic and reported the following: **“Women and girls were forcibly taken into police vehicles and accused of wearing a “bad hijab”, and held incommunicado, they were reportedly held in overcrowded spaces in police stations, received only one meal a day, with some of them being subjected to physical violence, threats and intimidation,”** (“Afghanistan: Taliban’s Arbitrary Arrests and Detention of Women and Girls Over Dress Code

Must End Immediately, UN Experts Say,” 2024.) The Taliban Afghan de facto authorities used coercive force, implementing fear on the women to effectively impose the order, they also used religious justification to control the way they dress, additionally they **“Legal representation and access to justice or reparation was not availed to them”** (Paragraph 4), this states that due to the Taliban control over the state and legal system they exercised their power successfully to control and order women to follow their law (bans-restrictions imposed.)

In conclusion, due to the Authoritarian Regime the Taliban have built over the past 4 years (2021-2025), they have acquired hard power - Coercive power, to control and exercise it successfully in the region. This use of power has gravely impacted the rights of women and the justice system in Afghanistan in key areas such as education, freedom of movement, and access to legal recourse. Nevertheless, the UN reports: **“Yet the fierce determination and resistance of Afghan women continues to burn – and inspire. Despite near-total restrictions on their lives, they still find ways to run businesses and work on the front lines as humanitarian workers, journalists, and community leaders.”** (United Nations Women, 2025) This statement shows that despite the hard situation and the power the Taliban has over them, the Afghan women continue to fight for their rights and achieve justice for themselves, serving as an imposition to the Taliban authorities.