



To All the Film Communities in The World and Who Loves Film and Cinema!

My name is Sahraa Karimi, a film director and the current general director of Afghan Film, the only stated-owned film company established in 1968.

I write to you with a broken heart and a deep hope that you can join me in protecting my beautiful people, especially filmmakers from the Taliban. In the last few weeks, the Taliban have gained control of so many provinces. They have massacred our people, they kidnapped many children, they sold girls as child brides to their men, they murdered a woman for her attire, they gauged the eyes of a woman, they tortured and murdered one of our beloved comedians, they murdered one of our historian poets, they murdered the head of culture and media for the government, they have been assassinating people affiliated with the government, they hung some of our men publicly, they have displaced hundreds of thousands of families. The families are in camps in Kabul after fleeing these provinces, and they are in unsanitary condition. There is looting in the camps and babies dying because they don't have milk. It is a humanitarian crisis, and yet the world is silent.

We have grown accustomed to this silence, yet we know it is not fair. We know that this decision to abandon our people is wrong, that this hasty troop withdrawal is a betrayal of our people and all that we did when Afghans won the Cold War for the west. Our people were forgotten then, leading up to the Taliban's dark rule, and now, after twenty years of immense gains for our country and especially our younger generations, all could be lost again in this abandonment.

We need your voice. The media, governments, and the world humanitarian organizations are conveniently silent as if this "Peace deal" with the Taliban was ever legitimate. It was never legitimate. Recognizing them gave them the confidence to come back to power. The Taliban have been brutalizing our people throughout the entire process of the talks. Everything that I have worked so hard to build as a filmmaker in my country is at risk of falling. If the Taliban take over they will ban all art. I and other filmmakers could be next on their hit list. They will strip women's rights, we will be pushed into the shadows of our homes and our voices, our expression will be stifled into silence. When the Taliban were in power, zero girls were in school. Since then there are over 9 million Afghan girls in school. This is incredible Herat, the third-largest city which just fell to the Taliban had nearly 50% women in its university. These are incredible gains that the world hardly knows about. Just in these few weeks, the Taliban have destroyed many schools and 2 million girls are forced now out of school again.

I do not understand this world. I do not understand this silence. I will stay and fight for my country, but I cannot do it alone. I need allies like you. Please help us get this world to care about what is happening to us. Please help us by informing your countries' most important media what is going on here in Afghanistan. Be our voices outside Afghanistan. If the Taliban take over Kabul, we may not have access to the internet or any communication tool at all. Please engage your filmmakers, artists to support us to be our voice.

This war is not a civil war, this is a proxy war, this is an imposed war and it is the result of the US deal with the Taliban. Please as much as you can share this fact with your media and write about us on your social media.

The world should not turn its back on us. We need your support and your voice on behalf of Afghan women, children, artists, and filmmakers. This support would be the greatest help we need right now.

Please help us get this world to not abandon Afghanistan. Please help us before the Taliban take over Kabul. We have such little time, maybe days. Thank you so much. I appreciate your pure true heart so dearly.

With regard,
Sahraa Karimi