

Statement of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

At the 69th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference

**To be delivered by H.E. Manizha Bakhtari, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of
the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the IAEA**

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Mr. President,

Director General,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Excellency, on your election as the President of the 69th Session of the IAEA General Conference and assure you of my full support and cooperation. Allow me also to acknowledge Director General Rafael Grossi for his commitment to expanding the peaceful applications of nuclear science to address pressing global challenges.

Distinguished delegates,

On 15th August 2025 marked the 4th consecutive year of the Taliban's forced takeover of Afghanistan.

Under their rule, Afghanistan is facing one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, with more than half of the Afghanistan population – around 23 million people – depending on food aid. Afghanistan today stands as one of the most vulnerable countries to global challenges such as climate change, global warming, water scarcity, energy shortfalls, environmental degradation, and natural disasters—all unfolding in the absence of governance, with the dismantling of democratic institutions and the collapse of health infrastructure.

The **devastating earthquake that struck Eastern Afghanistan** on 31 August 2025 is a tragic reminder of this vulnerability. Affecting three provinces, the earthquake has claimed Thousands of lives, left many more injured, and destroyed entire communities.

At the same time, the country is facing an ever-worsening human rights crisis: the media has been silenced, all freedoms have been rolled back, and women and girls, in particular, have

been erased from public life, denied education, and stripped of their most basic rights under a system of gender apartheid.

The Taliban's assault on knowledge and education further strengthens this repression. The so-called Ministry of Higher Education has banned the teaching of several subjects such as Constitutional Law, Women's Sociology, Human Rights, Democracy, and the Role of Women in Public Communication—deeming them contrary to its religious and political views. Nearly 700 academic books have been prohibited, while 66 other subjects across Political Science, Law, International Relations, Sociology, Psychology, and Media—including International Law, Foreign Policy, Civil Society, Human Development, and Media Literacy—are now subject to revision or modification.

Even in religious schools, where girls once found limited opportunities, restrictions are tightening. The Taliban's so called Ministries of Education and Higher Education have also been instructed to gradually restrict the enrollment of new female students in religious schools. Reports also indicate that Taliban leader expressed concern that including modern subjects such as mathematics, natural sciences, and languages in religious schools has diverted them from what he calls their "original purpose". These measures amount to a systematic erasure of women and a deliberate dismantling of Afghanistan's future, while also contributing to the growth of extremism in the region.

Distinguished delegates,

In light of the outlined situation, I wish to convey my concern regarding reports of potential arrangements, quiet engagements, and transactional dealings by some countries with the Taliban. Such actions may carry broader implications than anticipated, as they risk conveying a sense of normalization of the situation in the country.

We therefore call upon the IAEA and its Member States to carefully reconsider any actions that could contribute to cooperation with the Taliban under the current circumstances. Such actions risk empowering the Taliban, exacerbating human rights violations, and undermining international law.

The Taliban, an exclusive and extremist group, does not represent the will of the people of Afghanistan. Their regime, which remains unrecognized by the international community, will only further reinforce the refugee crisis with millions displaced, provide space for extremist networks and terrorist groups to grow and find safe haven, and solidify illicit drug trafficking—putting regional and global stability at great risk.

Engaging with such a group risks complicity in these violations and undermines the principles of equality and justice enshrined in the UN Charter and other international instruments. Instead, Member States should reflect on their humanitarian and political responsibilities and take concrete actions to promote human rights in Afghanistan. There are many entry points for this and numerous accountability mechanisms available.

As we speak, the 60th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council is taking place, presenting a vital opportunity for the establishment of an independent international investigative and accountability mechanism. To further reinforce a comprehensive “all-tools approach,” accountability pathways through the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) , with the review of CEDAW, must also be brought forward.

Cooperation with the IAEA and its Member States should be based on the understanding that any action implying recognition of the Taliban must be stopped. Instead, a door must be opened for inclusive political dialogue through a structured platform that brings together all sectors of Afghanistan society, including women, civil society, and the diaspora, to negotiate a transitional arrangement toward a representative, legitimate and constitutional order.

I thank you for your attention.