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TOPICS: Female Rights in Afghanistan,
Addressing the Humanitarian Crisis Caused by
the Situation in Somalia

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Female Rights in Afghanistan Recent Updates

As of now, the Taliban have restricted more rights of women in Afghanistan in their latest edict. This has included banning women from gyms, segregating park access by gender, and continuing to restrict the fields of employment for women. From the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, a spokesman spoke on the recent ban due to people ignoring the gender segregation order and women not wearing the required clothing.¹ With the ban being established, Taliban teams have now been monitoring the areas to check if women are using them in any way. Men from the Taliban have been entering these areas claiming to be from the Ministry of Vice and Virtue in order to remove women from gyms and parks.² No information of the women arrested has been released according to the Taliban-appointed Kabul police chief spokesman, and the United Nations representative in Afghanistan for women has condemned this ban due to the violation of rights. The ban has been enforced in the capital as of now, but can soon follow the pattern of being applied across the country in just a matter of time. In the UN, the human rights chief has spoken out against the Taliban government for arresting 5 people who were detained during a news conference that was organized by a women's civil society organization. The Taliban police had interrupted a news conference that was intended to launch the "Afghan Women's Movement for Equality," which was to be a new movement for women. However, 5 individuals were

¹ "Afghan women barred from gyms, Taliban official says." Al Jazeera, 10 November 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/10/taliban-ban-afghan-women-from-gyms-and-parks-in-new-crackdown>

² "Afghan women barred from gyms, Taliban official says." Al Jazeera, 10 November 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/10/taliban-ban-afghan-women-from-gyms-and-parks-in-new-crackdown>

arrested, detained, and searched instead.³ Organizations promoting women’s rights in Afghanistan have been targeted since the Taliban’s rise to power back in August 2021. In addition, bans continue to be placed against their education and ways of life which go on to affect their children and families.

³ Farge, Emma, et al. “UN calls on Taliban to release women's rights activists.” Reuters, 4 November 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/un-calls-taliban-release-womens-rights-activists-2022-11-04/>.

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Addressing the Humanitarian Crisis Caused by the Situation in Somalia Recent Updates

With the crisis in Somalia, food insecurity has become a prominent issue and factor. Around 7 million people in Somalia face acute food insecurity with 1.5 million of them being children. Despite international donations allowing an increase in food and cash relief, Somalia is still at risk of entering a deathly food crisis.⁴ Despite Somalia entering the rainy season, rain has not yet started causing crops or water to be easily accessible. Due to the lack of rain, droughts have worsened food insecurity. Without water, livestock and crops have continued to die which in turn has led to the deaths of a quarter of a million people in the past few years.⁵ Thus, the donations needed from relief assistance are even greater. The United Nations have predicted that areas where famine is likely to happen would be the Baidoa and Buurhakaba districts, which are located in the Bay region of the country. Organizations have had to more than double their food assistance since earlier this year and have been increasing in aid.⁶ However, food insecurity is not the only factor in the crisis in Somalia. Many civilians have also lost their lives due to attacks attributed to the al-Shabaab. The UN has claimed that at least 94% of these attacks have been connected to al-Shabaab and have been caused by explosive devices. Cars have been used to hide explosives, and in October twin blasts killed 121 people while injuring 333 more in the capital Mogadishu. The regions of Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, and Galgaduud have been facing waves of

⁴ UN Food Agency Warns Somalia Near Full-Blown Famine, 22 October 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/un-food-agency-warns-somalia-near-full-blown-famine/6800995.html>.

⁵ “Somalia emergency | World Food Programme.” WFP, <https://www.wfp.org/emergencies/somalia-emergency>.

⁶ UN Food Agency Warns Somalia Near Full-Blown Famine, 22 October 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/un-food-agency-warns-somalia-near-full-blown-famine/6800995.html>.

suicide attacks causing the government to try to stand their ground against al-Shabaab.⁷ With the possibility of a food crisis in some regions in Somalia and attacks against the civilians connected to al-Shabaab, the crisis in Somalia is not seen to be improving.

⁷ “CrisisWatch Digest Somalia.” Crisis Group, 14 November 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/crisiswatch-digest-somalia>.

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