

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF AFGHAN WOMEN

COMMUNIQUÉ – NOVEMBER 26, 2022

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear friends and comrades,

A month ago, on the occasion of the International Conference of Working Women, which brought together women and political and trade union activists from 18 countries (Algeria, Belgium, Benin, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Haiti, Hungary, Italy, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, the Philippines, Romania, Spain, Turkey and the United States), and responding positively to the call of the Spontaneous Afghan Women's Movement, we set up the International Committee in Defence of Afghan Women.

The aim of this international committee, as requested by our sisters in Afghanistan, is to support these women and girls who, at the risk of their lives, are demonstrating for the reopening of schools closed to them by the Taliban regime, for the right to work, and for the respect of their most basic rights. It is about fighting against the ferocious repression of which they are victims: assassinations, torture, arrests and disappearances – all this in the complicit silence of the governments of the major powers. They demand "Bread, work, and freedom". Hundreds of you have already joined our committee around the world, from South Africa to Great Britain, from Turkey to France: women workers, teachers, lawyers, trade unionists, writers, artists, activists, etc.

In this first communiqué, we publish two exceptional documents that have arrived from Kabul: two communiqués from the Spontaneous Afghan Women's Movement of 11 and 18 November, and photos of the meetings they have held in Kabul in recent days. You will also find two first lists of signatories, from Britain and France. Join us, make the cause of Afghan women known, it is the cause of women and workers all over the world!

Rubina JAMIL

General Secretary of the All Pakistan Trade Union Federation
(Pakistan)

Christel KEISER

National Secretary of the Independent and Democratic Workers' Party (France)

They formed the International Committee for the Defense of Afghan Women

ALGERIA: HAFSI Nadia. • **BELGIUM:** AIME Emilie, teacher; DARMONT Eléonore, student; K. Olga, social worker. • **BENIN:** GNONLONFOUN Liliane, trade unionist. • **CHILE:** LAPERTE Marcela, Independent Movement for the Rights of the People (MIDP) • **FRANCE:** KEISER Christel, POID national secretary; BAHLOUL Maïa, student, FJR (Federation of Young Revolutionaries); TIZZI Djemilla, trade unionist and POID member; MAS Nicole, member of the POID national bureau; ADOUE Camille, student, FJR member; LISCOËT Catherine, retired, member of the POID national bureau; DUPUY Martine, national secretary of the POID; MICHAUD Isabelle, CGT trade unionist; TEMPEREAU Lucile, young worker and POID member; SAUVAGE Jeanne, professor and researcher; FAURY Stéphanie, CGT-union officer at the Nemours hospital, South 77 Hospital Centre; ROUDIL Isabelle, trade union officer in social work; CORBEX Pascal, trade union officer in social work; FAUCHEUX Patrice, trade unionist; ANANOU Sarah; ANDERSON Amy; THRONE Stella. • **GERMANY:** ALBERT Lara, member of Die Linke, IG Metall trade unionist; SCHADE Vera, member of Die Linke. • **HAÏTI:** THELOT Myrlène, Haïti Liberté. • **HUNGARY:** SOMI Judit, working-class activist. • **ITALY:** GRILLI Monica, teacher, delegate and trade union leader; PANTELLA Agata, teacher. • **MOROCCO:** LAMINE Sakina. • **MEXICO:** DIAZ CRUZ Maria de Lourdes, Movimiento Nacional por la transformación Petrolera; ORTEGA Marisela, Political Institute of political education of MORENA; PLUMEDA Liliana Aguilar, Internationalist Communist League; SUAREZ Lidia, Professor National Teachers University. • **PAKISTAN:** JAMIL Rubina, All Pakistan Trade Union Federation. • **PHILIPPINES:** MIRANDA Judy Ann, Workers' Party (PM). • **ROMANIA:** CRETAN Marioara, League of Romanian Workers. • **SPANISH STATE:** MARTIN Reme, retired, working-class activist • **UNITED STATES:** BACCHUS Natalia, assistant to the President, Baltimore Teachers Union (Maryland)*; BROWN Diamonte, President, Baltimore Teachers Union (AFT, AFL-CIO) (Maryland)*; KHONSARI Niloufar, lawyer and immigrant workers' rights activist; KNOX Lisa, lawyer and immigrant workers' rights activist; ROJAS Désirée, President of the Sacramento Chapter of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (AFL-CIO)*; SHONE Mya, Socialist Organizer. • **TURKEY:** EROL Pinar, Executive committee member of Workers' Own Party (IKEP).

* Personal capacity.



« The women and girls of Afghanistan want bread, work, freedom, school, and education! »

Report on Afghan women's protest meeting condemning arbitrary arrests and kidnapping of female activists.

On November 18, hundreds of women in the provinces of Kabul, Herat, Laghman, and Balkh planned to protest against the arrest and kidnapping of women by the police and intelligence of the Taliban, but the Taliban did not allow them. Therefore, they were forced to express their objections through the meetings inside a house and convey their voice of oppression to the people of Afghanistan and the world.

Here, we share with you a summary of Ms. Z.Ozra's speech, the representative of the Spontaneous Movement of Afghan Women at a meeting held in Kabul:

"Dear friends and sisters,

The sisters gathered here wanted to launch a demonstration today in District 12 of Kabul, where other sisters, mainly teachers, feminists, women's rights activists and mothers of students, were also expected to participate. Unfortunately, the Taliban once again treated women brutally. They suppressed our demonstration and did not allow it. In the same way, some sisters who demonstrated in the cities of Jalalabad, Herat, Mehtarlam Baba and Balkh were beaten and threatened with weapons, and some were imprisoned.

But I would like to emphasize and tell the Taliban that they cannot silence our voices. The women and girls of Afghanistan want bread, work, freedom, school, and education. We do not want to be treated as animals, we cannot tolerate gender-based violence and sexual apartheid against women. We are determined to continue our protests and struggle in any form. We are not afraid of Taliban threats, prison and death.

We expect human rights organizations, women's rights defender, and feminist activists to support the oppressed women of Afghanistan against the misogynistic Taliban regime and not leave us alone in this tough struggle.

- **BREAD ! WORK, FREEDOM!**
- **Free all the imprisoned women!**
- **All girls' schools must be opened immediately!**
- **End violence against women!"**

Spontaneous Movement of Afghan Women.
November 18, 2022- Kabul, Afghanistan.



End the suppression and detention of protesting women!

Following the series of threats, arrests, torture and killing of protesting women in Kabul and other provinces of Afghanistan, on November 8, 2022 Ms. Farhat Popalzai one of the active members of the Afghan women's protesting movement, was arrested by the Taliban intelligence in Kabul, and so far there is no news about her fate.

According to the report of BBC Dari, quoted by Maryam Naibi a colleague of Farhat Popalzai, her phone has been switched off since 2 o'clock on Tuesday, and the contact with Ms. Farhat has been cut off. The Taliban security forces and the Kabul police, as always, deny the arrest of Mrs. Popalzai, but the fact is that the intelligence of the Taliban, in order to hide arbitrary arrests and prevent national and international protests against their brutal treatment against women, they cannot tolerate the political, civil and peaceful struggles of Afghan women.

Meanwhile, human rights organizations report the arrest of Ms. Ozra, Ms. Parwana, Ms. Farzia, Ms. Safia, Ms. Roheena, Ms. Asia, Ms. Zarmineh, Ms. Mahtab, Ms. Laila, Ms. Bibi Shaima, Ms. Parvin, Ms. Brishna, Ms. Tarana, Ms. Bibi Lima, Ms. Marzia, and Ms. Shagofa in the provinces of Kabul, Herat, Laghman, and Takhar. According to their families, the mentioned activists, feminists and teachers were arrested by the Taliban and taken to unknown places in October and November on charges of participating in women's demonstrations and street protests.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesperson of the Taliban, considers the struggle and resistance of the protesting women to be the plan of foreign countries in order to discredit the Taliban government and warns that they will not allow any movement that contradicts the Islamic laws.

It should be remembered that on November 3rd Ms. Zarifa Yaqoubi and four of her colleagues were arrested during the press conference in west of Kabul city, their families still do not know about their condition. The United Nations delegation in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and human rights organizations and women's rights defenders inside and outside Afghanistan demanded the immediate release of Ms. Yaqoubi and all imprisoned women.

In addition to the official prisons, the Taliban have many private prisons where they torture and keep opponents and women protesters without contact with their families, human rights organizations, or access to a defense lawyer.

The Spontaneous Movement of Afghan Women by condemning the arrest of protesting women and inhumane treatment with them, calls on all women's rights organizations and individuals to put pressure on the misogynist Taliban regime to stop the arrests and torture of protesting women and for the immediate release of Ms. Zarifa Yaqoubi and her colleagues, Ms. Popelzi and dozens of other protesting women in the terrible prisons of the Taliban, they are expected to declare their solidarity and stand by the women of Afghanistan.

The Taliban must know that by suppressing and imprisoning, torturing and killing women, they cannot silence the freedom and equality voice of Afghan women. The "Spontaneous Movement of Afghan Women", as an independent women's movement in Afghanistan, in coordination with other Afghan women's groups, continues to struggle for freedom, civil rights and the right to life of Afghan women.

Spontaneous Movement of Afghan Women.
November 11, 2022, Kabul, Afghanistan.

FRANCE

Among the first two hundred affiliations to the International Committee in France, the following were received: Mohamed Abdi Tahir Franco-Somali Solidarity Association, Le Relecq-Kerhuon ; Auriane Aït Lasri, PCF (French Communist Party) deputy mayor ; Natalia Andrade, working woman, mother, law student, Limoges university ; Néjia Bacha, lawyer ; Nassera Benmarnia, deputy Mayor Marseille, Left wing ; Arno Bertina, writer ; Ariane Bois, novelist and journalist ; Lionel Borée, Town councillor Les Mureaux ; Nicole Bouxel, Peace Movement, Malakoff ; Morgane Bougeard, restaurant manager, Brest ; Rony Brauman ; Fernand Carré, rail-worker, LFI (Unbowed France), Chartres ; Dominique Carton, PCF activist, Clichy ; Nathalie Caudron, regional government trade unionist ; Anne Champigny, community activist; Martine Chenet, Town councillor Rozérieulles ; Claude Cognault, community activist; Laetitia Delbe, paediatrician ; Marie-Hélène Delavaux-Roux, senior lecturer (Brest University) ; Célestine Denèle, secretary of the « Patin collectif » feminist association (personal capacity) ; Nathalie Desjacques, trade unionist ; Amandine Dhée, writer; Mama Doucouré, Town councillor Montreuil, in charge with women’s rights ; Martine Duthé, CGT trade unionist ; Lydia Frentzel, ecologist councillor (Marseille) ; Natacha Gallego, LFI activist; Annick Galliani, CGT shop-steward at Carsat (Marseille) ; Solène Gaudin, senior lecturer (Rennes-2 University) ; Olivia Gazalé, feminist philosopher; Riva Gerchanoc, chair-person of Combat laïque, combat social (Secular fight, social fight) – Unite the People (Clcs-Flp) ; François Goglines, PS (Socialist Party), Mayor of Villemanuche (89) ; Sylvie Gohier, Secretary of the CGT Trades Council Dreux ; William Gohier, anticapitalist trade union activist; Zohra Hassoun, woman ; Marie-Laure Henner, SUD Éducation trade unionist; Brigitte Jeannot, lawyer ; Sandra Lamotte, trade unionist ; Anne-Catherine Levecque, POID (Democratic, Independent Workers’ Party) national secretary ; Marie Maher, writer ; Naïma Maoui, teacher ; Émilie Marche, LFI Regional Councillor Rhône-Alpes ; Catherine Marchi, Droits des femmes (Women’s Rights) Forum ; Pascal Mazet, PCF regional councillor Occitanie ; Danielle Merian, Lawyer ; Guillaume Meurice, comedian ; Florence Montreynaud, history researcher ; Brigitte Moranne, trade unionist, CGT health-care workers union ; Isabelle Mulquin, trade unionist ; Françoise Oriol, community activist; Élisabeth Ornago, trade unionist; Véronique Parisot, senior lecturer (Bourgogne university) ; Céline Prier-Cheron, teacher trade unionist; Kalila Sevin, LFI activist, deputy of Member of Parliament Manuel Bompard ; Christelle Simon, secretary of the CGT in charge with school matters (Paris) ; Geneviève Simon, trade unionist ; Claude Theil, retired, Socialist Party; Nadia Tiar, lawyer ; Clothilde Vega-Ritter, socialist municipal councillor, Clichy ; Catherine Weinzaepflen, writer ; Jérémy Zorzer-Pépi, CGT trade unionist.

GREAT BRITAIN

Among the first members of the International Committee, in Britain (in a personal capacity): Jo Rust, Secretary, King’s Lynn & District Trades Council and Independent Borough Councillor in King’s Lynn ; Ian Hodson, National President, BFAWU; Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, BFAWU; Andrea Egan, National President, UNISON and UNISON NEC; Libby Nolan, Vice President, UNISON and UNISON NEC; Amerit Rait, Vice President, UNISON and UNISON NEC; Jane Doolan, UNISON NEC and Branch Secretary, Islington UNISON; Rebecca Brookman UNISON NEC; John McNally, President, PCS 2007-17 (retd.); Jane Gebbie, Unite and Deputy Leader, Bridgend Council; Shiraz Durrani, Tottenham CLP, Margaret K. Taylor, Treasurer, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Trades Council ; Mike Calvert, Deputy Branch Secretary, Islington UNISON; Cllr Makbule Gunes, Tottenham CLP; Cathy Brennan Hornsey & Wood Green CLP; Jo Alexander Tottenham CLP; Avril Baker, Stroud Green branch, Hornsey & Wood Green; Stefan Cholewka, Secretary, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough TUC ; Diana James, Assistant Branch Secretary, Islington UNISON; Briony Densham, convenor for schools, Islington UNISON; Charles Charalambous, Labour Internationalist; Fiona Monkman, Chairperson, Islington UNISON; Melanie Kitchen, President, Oldham Trades Union Council; Alan Davies, Secretary, Oldham TUC; Henry Mott, Unite Southwark Council branch, London Eastern Branch 1341; Carmel Cadden, Tottenham CLP; Tony Rimmer, former surcharged Liverpool City Councillor, Unite Community Branch Liverpool; Audrey White, Secretary, Liverpool Against the War; Jackie Yems, Unite Branch.1431.; Sheila Coleman, Unite Liverpool; Cllr Anna Rothery, Unite member and Leader, Liverpool Community Independents; Cllr Sam Gorst, Liverpool Community Independents; Cllr Gerard Woodhouse, Liverpool County Ward, Liverpool City Council; Peter Durrant, Unite Community member; Nick Phillips, Lambeth and Southwark Unite Community ; Phil Maxwell, film maker; Hazuan Hashim, film Maker; Doreen McNally, Liverpool Unite Community branch and former spokesperson, Women of the Waterfront (pers. cap.); Paul Filby, Secretary, Unite Construction Branch, Liverpool; Sabrina Bryan, Women’s Officer, Islington UNISON; Cllr Mick Gilgunn, Islington; Karen Bellion, Liverpool Walton CLP; Jo Thomas, Clwyd West CLP; Cllr Mark Blake, Hornsey & Wood Green CLP; Noeleen Grattan, Haringey UNISON and Hornsey & Wood Green CLP; Margot Leicester, Hornsey & Wood Green CLP; Keith Dobie, Haringey & Barnet Unite Community; Mel Lee, Islington UNISON.

Trade union bodies: Islington UNISON Branch Committee; Unite the Union Greater Manchester Unite Social Action Branch NW/389.

I publicly endorse the International appeal of the International Committee for the Defence of Afghan Women.

- In my personal capacity:
- On behalf on my organisation :

Capacity in which my endorsement should appear:

Name, Forename:

Adress:

City:

Phone : E-mail :

Signature:

Coupon to be returned to:
afghanistanwomen2022@gmail.com