



*Australian Association of Women Judges*  
*Advancing human rights and equal justice for all*

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**Statement on Women Judges in Afghanistan.**

The Australian Association of Women Judges (AAWJ) joins with the many international and national associations expressing their grave concerns about the unfolding situation in Afghanistan, particularly for women and girls.

The AAWJ supports the efforts to evacuate Australian personnel and Afghan citizens who worked alongside them. In addition, we urge the Australian Government to consider the plight of women leaders, who have made substantial contributions to their nation over the last 20 years and are at risk because of their roles and gender, including women Judges.

Some 270 women serve as judges in Afghanistan. They have played a significant part in developing the rule of law and respect for human rights, adding to the overall capacity building in Afghanistan that Australia has supported as part of its mission there.

Members of the Afghan Women Judges Association report that they love their country and do not want to leave. For some, though, the threats to their safety and that of their families is overwhelming. They have good cause to be fearful. Two women judges were murdered on the streets of Kabul on their way to court in January this year and many have been subject to threats and intimidation, which we are told are ongoing.

The AAWJ joins with the International Association of Women Judges, the International Association of Judges and the Australian Judicial Officers Association in their calls for urgent, meaningful and sustained support for the judiciary in Afghanistan, especially the women judges.

One meaningful step would be to offer humanitarian visas to women judges at risk because of their role and gender. The AAWJ is encouraged by news this morning that Minister Dutton is considering Humanitarian Visa Options for Prominent Women and calls on the Australian Government to play a part in securing safe passage and refuge for Afghan women Judges and their families who are facing this existential crisis.

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