

## Taliban's banning of women from university education is giant step backward for Afghanistan equality, healthcare & economy



**Geneva, Switzerland; 21 December 2022** — The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is deeply concerned by the Taliban's decision to ban women from university education, calling it a giant step backward for gender equality, health and economic development in Afghanistan.

ICN President, Pamela Cipriano said, "The decision to ban women from university education in Afghanistan is deeply troubling. It will prevent the professional development of many of the nursing students and the advancement of equity in the country. Education is a fundamental human right and also a cornerstone of our economies. The decision to deny women and girls educational opportunities not only deprives them of a better future, but it is also a setback for the development of the whole country.

'ICN is in regular contact with the Afghanistan Nurses Association and through our Humanitarian Fund has been providing support for continuing education for nurses. We are concerned that the decision to ban women from university education will be both a personal blow to aspirations of a generation of girls and gravely affect the future of the Afghan health services which our nurses report is already in crisis.

The decision also runs counter to the principles at the heart of global health and our ambition to reach the UHC goals in a world where inclusivity and equity are non-negotiable. Afghanistan's leaders should reconsider this ban and support the education of women and girls which is shown to improve health and national economic prosperity."

ICN will continue to show its solidarity for all women in Afghanistan through its regular support for the Afghanistan Nurses Association.

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