



## **GCE Statement on the Taliban take over in Afghanistan**

### **The Right to Education for Women, Girls, and People with Disabilities is at risk.**

Following the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) is extremely concerned about the impact on the protection of human rights and the increasing number of people fleeing within and across national borders. The number of people displaced this year in Afghanistan has risen to 550,000 and during the last three days UNHCR's staff estimate that around 120,000 people from surrounding areas have arrived at Kabul in search of safety<sup>[1]</sup>.

This will not only exacerbate ongoing humanitarian crises in the region but will leave Afghans at risk of further abuse. Notably, girls, women, and all of those who do not share their political views will be particularly vulnerable.

Overall, the progress made by those communities in building a democratic society in which everyone's voice counts and where girls and women can attend school and enjoy basic freedoms can be shattered not only by the takeover by the Taliban but also by the failure of the international community to protect their rights.

The images we are now watching on international media speak for themselves. Hundreds of civilians are desperately trying to board military aircraft. The armed forces are expected to protect civilians, but in many instances, they are leaving them behind or perpetrated injustices on them.

GCE calls on all parties and the international community to support democratic institutions in Afghanistan and ensure the re-establishment of the conditions that guarantee the full rule of law and the respect of human rights, including the right to education of women, girls, and people with disabilities.

In particular, the fundamental freedoms of women, girls, and minority and ethnic groups must be respected and protected by all parties, including their freedom of movement, freedom of

opinion, expression and identity, and their right to education and lifelong learning, without which no person can live with dignity.

GCE strongly believes that investing in education instead of armed forces will build a sustainable and inclusive society. We believe that educating girls and women is key to achieving an equitable and democratic society.

We express our solidarity with the Afghan people and particularly with the civil society organisations that are members of the Global Campaign for Education.

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<sup>[1]</sup> UNHCR (2021). Urgent: Rapid escalation in Afghanistan.