

IMC Statement about music rights in Afghanistan

Paris, 13.12.2022

Despite speculations within the international community about changes in the attitude and behaviour of the Taliban in months before their return to power, we observe with grave concern that when the group re-captured the Afghan state, the Afghan people and musicians were denied their music rights as were Afghan girls and women deprived of their basic human rights to full and active participation in Afghan society and of their right to education and work.

Today as during the first reign of the Taliban, the group turned Afghanistan once again into a silent nation and denied the Afghan people, children and adults, the right to enjoy access to music, to learn, experience, create, perform, and express themselves through music in all freedom. Today, the artistic soul of the country has faded from public view and its musicians live under continuous threat and hardship not being allowed to make a living through music. The total ban on music in Afghanistan is a violation of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that 'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts.'

For this reason, the international music community condemns the cultural and musical genocide in Afghanistan and the Taliban's unrelenting suppression and violation of the Five Music Rights of the Afghan people as upheld by the International Music Council.

These rights include access to music education for every child and adult. We express serious concern about the closure of music education entities including the renowned Afghanistan National Institute of Music and regarding reports on musicians being treated as criminals, beaten, humiliated, and murdered because of their profession. We call on all who love music to raise our collective voices against this systematic destruction and erasure of musical life in the Afghan society and demand the restoration and respect of the Five Music Rights in Afghanistan. We will not be silent.

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