

NURSES UNITED

Nurses United stands in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan

The Afghan people have experienced decades of war, injustice and harm. The last few weeks have seen a new escalation in violence and fear as the Taliban swept across the nation and took control of the capital following the unexpected and swift removal of American forces.

We stand particularly with the women and girls of Afghanistan, who stand to lose everything they have fought for and won. Despite the systemic, entrenched discrimination they experience in their daily lives, they have created and led change in their communities, politics, business and education. Now women and girls in Afghanistan are being failed again. The tragic and personal sacrifices they and the Afghan people have suffered for justice and equality now seem futile.

We are also mindful of those members of our Armed Forces who bear the scars of this conflict, as well as those who lost their lives, their families and friends and those still serving. Their blood, sweat and tears have been dismissed by the apparent willingness of the UK government, and its allies, to abandon what they fought and died for.

The United Kingdom has a duty of responsibility to the Afghan people and must act to support all who fear for their future. Due to the UK's military involvement over the past two decades and more, we have instigated and supported actions that have destroyed, and are still destroying, lives. We cannot stand by and wash our hands of the situation, make sympathetic noises or empty promises. We must open our borders and enable the safe passage of Afghan refugees. Not just 20,000, which is a drop in the ocean of the millions who have been dispossessed, but to all who seek help and shelter. We have the resources, the space and the moral duty to provide a safe haven for the victims of our wars.

We urge everyone who believes in the fundamental human right to live free from violence and oppression to join the call to make the UK government fulfil its obligations. Sign petitions, write to/email your MP, show your solidarity on social media, donate to the many charities desperately trying to help and attend demonstrations if you can do so safely. We must take action which hears and responds to the needs of the Afghan people.

In the words of Elie Wiesel, writer, professor, political activist, Nobel laureate, and Holocaust survivor; *"We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."*

Written by Jemma James, Acting Convenor of Nurses United's Core Leadership Team