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## Threats to women's rights persist

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Based on article 22nd of the Constitution of Afghanistan “The citizens of Afghanistan, man and woman, have equal rights and duties before the law.” But in practice, such a thing is not observable, as in Afghanistan man is considered superior than woman and women have to follow the rules defined by men not by government. If we see Afghanistan in the context of history, we would know that women have always been deprived of their due rights.

If life, for some women, is different than Taliban times we should not be overly optimistic, as for majority serious obstacles to live a better life exist. During the Taliban rule, women were punished and even executed in public for unjustifiable and minor reasons. Unfortunately, the practice has not ended, as the Taliba's Shariah is still valid. In the districts where Taliban have more control and influences, people are punished in accordance with Shariah – a clear challenge to Afghan government. In addition, a big portion of Afghan population has resembling mentality as that of Taliban which has resulted in the sufferings of Afghan women to become manifold.

Despite all these, the international community has been helping Afghanistan to come out of the long-term conflicts with women's rights among its key priorities. Success cannot be achieved over nights. Afghan women are hopeful of their future, as struggle for a better life continues.

Much has changed for Afghan women. They now take active part in politics of the country. In the last Presidential and Provincial Councils' elections a prominent number of women took part. Of the 41 presidential candidates, two were women; eight of the 82 vice-presidential candidates were women; and 328, or more than 10 percent, of the 3,196 candidates for provincial seats were women. At the same time, in 2010 parliamentary elections, 400 women had nominated themselves.

But are women gains fragile and at the risk by of being lost? According to a report by Oxfam, with the imminent withdrawal of international forces, there is a risk that women's rights might be sacrificed in order to secure a political deal with the Taliban and other armed opposition groups.

Not only the hard-earned achievements of women are in a fragile position but also the overall political, economic, democratic and security gains are fragile and a certain level of uncertainty prevails in the country. The fragility of Afghanistan is due to the growing strength of insurgency at times when the international troops have been scheduled to withdraw by the end of 2014.