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TRIBUNE

The Taliban build an open-air prison for Afghan women, by Atiq Rahimi

At a time when the Taliban regime has just introduced even stricter bans on women, forbidding them to speak in public or wear perfume, the Franco-Afghan writer and filmmaker cries out in revolt on behalf of all his oppressed compatriots.

« More words and cries. More weapons and tears. Desperately. I wonder if I still have words to say about my native land, Afghanistan, the epitome of desolation! And the voice to cry out, weapons to take, tears to shed...

No. I feel as helpless as the empty hands of an Afghan father returning home unable to feed his family. As humiliated as the young boy who can't grow the beard demanded by the Taliban. As invisible as this Afghan tv presenter, who is not allowed to show words on her lips. As frustrated as those lovers who no longer know how to recite poems of love to each other... And as deaf and blind as the world's great powers. As ridiculous as these men of the United Nations, sitting down with that army of darkness, the Taliban, which even imposes its will on them to not have a single woman at the negotiating table! What a masquerade, this filthy world!

Do I need to write these words again? I wonder.

I am tired of writing and hearing the same empty phrases, the "firm" condemnations that have never shaken a single Taliban moron who came to destroy my land, nor the oil kings who finance them, nor their arms and Koran merchants who, directly or indirectly, cherish them.

No sanction, no embargo will bring the smile on the lips of Afghan women, forced to hide their faces, their hands, their feet... nor the music in the ears of this young boy deprived of his dreams.

I have had enough of this charade, this diplomatic circus in which the United Nations play dumb with the Taliban. What's their despicable plan? To discuss the color of chadors, while women, our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, are being buried alive under their shitty laws? What a pitiful spectacle! Here we are, watching tyrants dictate their law while the world looks the other way.

More words, damned words, spat out like lashes on a world that doesn't give a damn. Yes, I spit them out, like poison you've

kept in the mouth too long, because there's nothing else to do. My Afghanistan, this godforsaken desert of desolation, is nothing more than a corpse to be paraded in the newspapers, a social talking point for smooth talkers.

Go and ask an Afghan writer to write a few words about her situation. Here's the answer you'd get: "I don't write to beg for your pity. I don't write to beg your help, the help that keeps us alive just long enough to continue suffering. No, I write because it's all I have. Words like knives, sharpened by rage, soaked in the hatred of seeing this rotten world let Afghanistan be slaughtered! I spit on your resolutions, on your empty promises. We don't need your words anymore. We need justice, we need to see these monsters burn in the light of the freedom they tried to stifle. And as long as I breathe, I'll shove my words, my cries, and my curses down their throats, until this complicit silence is broken forever."

And a young Afghan would tell you: "And these leaders, these damn leaders, where are they? Blind, deaf, mute, all they know how to do is play diplomat while our people die, our culture is raped, our women are shattered. A revolution?! What a joke! Where are our weapons? Where are our brave men, ready to destroy this obscurantist army?"

Yes, more words, but this time, engraving the Taliban's latest legislative ignominy. Laws, you say? Rather chains forged in hatred, designed to crush, humiliate and annihilate any glimmer of hope that still remains in this country disfigured by barbarism. Want to know what they're imposing now? Sit down, because it's going to make you nauseous.

The latest "brilliant" idea of these tyrants: force women to cover themselves from head to toe, leaving nothing, absolutely nothing visible. Not even a glance, not even a breath of humanity. And don't think that's all. They're now forbidding women to travel alone. Yes, that's right. An Afghan woman can no longer take a damn bus, a cab, or even walk down the street without being accompanied by a male member of her family. What's the alternative? It's violence, public humiliation, and maybe worse.

And let's talk about that other sordid law: the ban on women interacting with non-Muslims. Seriously? As if their obsession with religious purity could erase the humanity of every woman in Afghanistan. They even dared to ban women from raising their voices in public. Can you imagine? A woman can no longer speak, sing or laugh. It's silence or death.

I don't write to inform you, I write to revolt. I write because these laws are a declaration of war on human dignity. As long as these laws exist, as long as this regime exists, there will be no peace, there will be no rest. Only rage, rage, and more rage, until every abject law is erased, until every Afghan woman can breathe freely again, like Zakia Khudadadi, who just won the bronze medal in taekwondo at the Paris Paralympics. She has made history by becoming the first Afghan woman to take part in the Paralympics in over seventeen years. Her journey is particularly remarkable, given the difficult circumstances she faced as a woman and as a disabled person living under the Taliban regime. Her story is a powerful testament to resilience and determination, and she represents a symbol of hope for many Afghans, especially women and girls who continue to fight for their rights and freedoms against a backdrop of extreme repression.

And all the while, the international community continues to chew on its sterile condemnations, sitting comfortably around tables where these Taliban dictate their 'vision' of the world. The reality is that these laws are nothing less than the construction of an open-air prison for Afghan women. A prison where each decree is another brick in the wall of their oppression. »

Atiq Rahimi