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**WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION
ON THE
PROHIBITION OF ACCESS OF WOMEN TO HEALTH CARE
AND THE
PROHIBITION OF PRACTICE BY FEMALE DOCTORS IN AFGHANISTAN**

Adopted by the 49th WMA General Assembly
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Hamburg, Germany, November 1997

PREAMBLE

For years women and girls in Afghanistan have been suffering increasing violations of their human rights; In 1996 a general prohibition was introduced on practice by women, which affected more than 40,000 women. Human rights organisations call this a "human rights catastrophe" for the women in Afghanistan. Women are completely excluded from social life, girls' schools are closed, women students have been expelled from universities, and women and girls are stoned in the street. According to information from the United Nations on the human rights situation in Afghanistan (February, 1996) the prohibition on practice affects first of all women working in the educational and health sectors. In particular female doctors and nurses were prevented from exercising their profession. Although the health sector was on the brink of collapse under these restrictions, they have been eased only slightly. Without access to female doctors female patients and their children have no access to health care. Some female doctors have been allowed now to exercise their profession, but in general only under strict and unacceptable supervision (US Department of State, Afghanistan Report on Human Rights Practices for 1996, January 1997).

RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, the World Medical Association urges its national member associations to insist and call on their governments:

- to condemn roundly the serious violations of the basic human rights of women in Afghanistan; and,
- to take worldwide action aimed at restoring the fundamental human rights of women and removing the provision prohibiting women from practising their profession.
- to insist on the rights of women to adequate medical care across the whole range of medical and surgical services, including acute, subacute and ongoing treatment.

RESCINDED