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The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRN) is an alliance of more than 90 honorary societies that defends the fundamental rights of scholars worldwide and supports academic institutions under threat. We, the members of the IHRN's Executive Committee, strongly condemn the ban against women's participation in higher education in Afghanistan announced this week by the Taliban's acting Minister of Higher Education. Denying women access to education is a gross violation of fundamental international human rights standards, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and is an affront to women's dignity and agency. The full participation of women in Afghan society, including through access to education, is crucial for advancing development in the country. This ban will have a devastating impact on the younger generation of scientists, engineers, and health professionals and cause lasting harm to Afghanistan, if not reversed immediately.

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