



*International Association of Judges*  
*Union Internationale des Magistrats*  
*Union Internacional de Magistrados*  
*Internationale Richtervereinigung*  
*Unione Internazionale dei Magistrati*



International Association  
of Women Judges

## **Joint statement of the International Association of Judges (IAJ) and the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ)**

Judges in Afghanistan are in very grave danger.

Judges are at risk because they made rulings in terrorism and security cases in accordance with the law. They are at risk because of their rulings in criminal cases. They are at risk because, where required by law, they ruled against men in domestic violence, divorce and child custody cases. They are at risk because some of these judgments were made against Taliban members. In effect judges in Afghanistan are at risk because they upheld the rule of law and respected human rights.

Women judges are at added risk because of their gender. The Taliban does not accept that women have the right to judge men.

Judges have had their houses searched and their bank accounts suspended. They have been the subject of threatening messages and physical harassment. Their families, friends and neighbours have been targeted to reveal their whereabouts. The threat escalates daily. The judges live in fear for their lives and for the lives of their families. They are under unbearable stress. Many are forced to move from one safehouse to another, having difficulty accessing food and basic healthcare.

To increase the danger, terrorists and those convicted of very serious crimes have been released from prisons by the Taliban, creating an additional threat of revenge killings of judges. Exacerbating this issue is the fact that their personal information is no longer confidential.

Time and again the IAJ and the IAWJ have denounced the terrible threats pending against our colleagues in Afghanistan.

United we stand in solidarity.

We urge the global community to work together to save the lives of the Afghan judges and their families. This requires safe travel options, visas for transit and for ultimate destination countries and support for the judges and their families to rebuild their lives. We ask that States ensure humanitarian visa quotas for Afghan judges at-risk, especially women judges.

Urgent efforts must be taken to efficiently issue the necessary visas. We call on all countries to act immediately. This is an absolute prerequisite to save lives.

Judge José Igreja Matos, President of the IAJ ([www.iaj-uim.org](http://www.iaj-uim.org))

Justice Susan Glazebrook, President of the IAWJ ([www.iawj.org](http://www.iawj.org))