



Access to basic rights: What adequate sanitation has to do with promoting the rule of law

May 28th marks the International Day of Menstrual Hygiene. It is dedicated to raising awareness on the importance of menstrual hygiene and breaking taboos surrounding menstruation.

In 2017 the first ever Girls' Hygiene Day was celebrated in Afghanistan to raise awareness. It was supported by famous figures including the First Lady Ms Rula (Bibi Gul) Ghani, the Minister of Education Dr Assadullah Hanif Balkhi and the Minister of Public Health Dr Ferozuddin Feroz.

Dr Feroz outlined that 'ignorance about their monthly cycle will negatively influence the health and hygiene of girls, not only during school but also at home and later during their family life' [1]. In 2018, with the participation of prominent religious scholars, the first ever National Guidelines on Menstrual Hygiene in Afghanistan was published.[2]

The Afghan-German Cooperation's Project for the Promotion of the Rule of Law (RoL) aims at improving access to justice for all, especially for women. RoL supports students of Sharia and Law faculties in legal clinics to gain practical experience and study real cases.

 In most cases, female students are deprived of their basic rights and needs. For instance, in Baghlan University there is only one latrine for all male and female staff and students. Because of this, female staff and students often do not feel comfortable using it. They are left with two options: Either they go home to use the latrine and then return, which can be very time consuming and may mean missing classes or work, or they stay at the university until the day is over.

Basic and fundamental rights are universal and interdependent. Their fulfillment is a precondition for any kind of development. To assure that all students, especially women, have access to their basic rights, including their right to health and dignity, a latrine with AFN 70,000 will be financed by RoL. Access to adequate sanitation is a prerequisite to allow female students equal participation in academic life without any limitation.

Health Awareness

Failure to observe personal hygiene during menstruation can cause infertility, cysts in the uterus and other gynecological problems. These problems can be avoided with proper nutrition during menstruation and personal hygiene.

The Bracelet Campaign

The Menstruation Bracelet is a simple but powerful symbol for menstruation. It is part of the worldwide awareness-campaign for MHD. 'The Menstruation Bracelet is a global symbol for menstruation created by MHD. It stands for our joint commitment to create a world, by 2030, where no woman or girl is kept from realising her full potential because she menstruates. A world where menstruation is just a normal fact of life.'

[1] [Afghanistan: first ever Girls Hygiene Day | MHD Day \(menstrualhygieneday.org\)](#)

[2] [It was almost surreal | UNICEF Afghanistan](#)

Teaser text:

Worldwide about 1.9 billion women and girls menstruate every month. Menstruation is a symbol for a healthy female body than for anything else. Still, stigmatisation and missing access to proper sanitation lead to women's and girls' exclusion from





daily routine: About 500 million girls and women face constraints during their period, influencing all aspects of their life such as education, participation, health, economics and dignity.

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