

## INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS – MANITOBA, INC.

**DATE:** February 16, 2014

**TO:** The Right Honourable Prime Minister Stephen Harper  
The Honourable John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Manitoba Members of Parliament  
Manitoba Senators

**FROM:** Members of the International Institute for Women's Rights, Manitoba Chapter (the IIWR-MB)

**RE:** A Call to Denounce Afghan Parliament Passing Law Silencing Women Subjected to Violence and Urge President Hamid Karzai Not to Sign On

We are writing this letter to you as a women's and human rights organization located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, which is focused on these issues both locally and internationally.

Recently, the Afghan Parliament passed a new law under the country's criminal prosecution code which prohibits the relatives of an accused person from testifying against them. Given that the rampant violence taking place against women in Afghanistan is often at the hands of those in the victim's family, this new law effectively silences victims and denies them an avenue to prosecute their abusers. The bill is currently with President Hamid Karzai, who is responsible to sign this new law into force.

We call upon you to publicly express your disappointment with and condemnation for this new Afghan law, in the hopes of discouraging President Karzai from signing the same into force. It is so important that countries of the world, like Canada, speak out at this time to ensure that international women's rights are not abandoned or reduced in any way. Canada is a world leader in the protection of women's rights and has made a foreign policy commitment to protect and advance international women's human rights. There is no better issue than this for Canada to take a strong stance against in advancing these objectives.

We urge you to speak out publicly and quickly! There is no time to waste, as President Karzai may sign this law into force at any moment.

Respectfully,



**Marilou McPhedran and Mary Scott – Co chairs**

Institute for International Women's Rights – Manitoba  
971 Corydon Ave.,  
PO Box 273,  
Winnipeg, MB., R3M 0Y0  
e-mail: [iiwr.manitoba@gmail.com](mailto:iiwr.manitoba@gmail.com)