



EUROPEAN  
FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY

کلیمه  
KALIMA NEWS



Afghanischer Frauenverein e. V.

**BETWEEN FREEDOM AND THE THREAT OF THE TALIBAN**  
***Women's Perspectives on Progress***  
***and Challenges in Afghanistan***

*Lunch debate*  
*Monday, 6th July 2009*  
*12.30 - 14.30*

*in the*

**Tagungszentrum im Hause der Bundespressekonferenz, Schiffbauerdamm 40**

The international debate on Afghanistan in recent months has been dominated by the proposed so-called "Shiite law", which has caused international outrage, and by the renewed brutal attacks by the Taliban against women's rights activists. Against this background and in the light of the complexities of the Afghan society, today's event aims to provide a platform to leading Afghan women's rights activists with a view to examining the situation of women in Afghanistan, their role in achieving progress and, more in general, the challenges in empowering women in Afghanistan.

The debate will be in English and German. Please find detailed information about the speakers and organisers below.

*Chair*

**Seyran Ateş**, Women's Rights Lawyer and Author, Berlin

*Speakers*

**Fatima Gailani**, President of the Afghan "Red Crescent Society", Kabul

**Laila Noor**, Chairwomen of the "Independent Afghan Women Association", Bremen

**Shikiba Babori**, Founder of the journalist network KALIMA, Cologne

**Rona Yussof Mansury**, Board Member "Afghan Women Society" (Afghanischer Frauenverein), Osnabrück

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED.**

**Sandwiches and drinks will be served. Please confirm your participation by email to [Daniel@EuropeanDemocracy.org](mailto:Daniel@EuropeanDemocracy.org) or fax: +32 2 213 0049. For any queries please contact Daniel Trautvetter: +32 2 213 0042.**

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**Fatima Gailani**, President of the Afghan "Red Crescent Society"

Fatima Gailani has been serving as the president of the Afghan Red Crescent Society since 2004. She is the daughter of Pir Sayed Ahmed Gailani, the leader of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan who fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. Ms Gailani obtained a BA and subsequently an MA in Persian Literature and Sufism in 1978 from the National University of Iran. She also earned an MA in Islamic Studies from the Muslim College in London in 1994. She attended the Bonn Conference on Afghanistan in 2001. After her return to Afghanistan she was chosen as a delegate to the Emergency Loya Jirga – Grand Council – of June 2002 and was appointed as a constitution drafting and ratifying commissioner. Ms Gailani is the author of two books (Mosques of London and a biography of Mohammed Mosa Shafi).

**Laila Noor**, Chairwomen of the "Independent Afghan Women Association"

Laila Noor is the daughter of the last freely-elected mayor of Kabul. For years she has been engaged in the struggle for the rights of women in Afghanistan. After the fall of the Taleban she started to provide education to girls and women in Afghanistan. In recognition for her many years of achievement she has been received in January 2008 by the President of Germany, Horst Köhler, and has been awarded a medal from the Afghan government. She works as fashion designer, organiser of exhibitions, speaker and Chairwomen of the "Independent Afghan Women Association".

**Shikiba Babori**, Founder of the journalist network KALIMA and Creator of the exhibition "Orphans in Afghanistan"

Shikiba Babori, born in Kabul in 1966, lives and works as an ethnologist and free-lance journalist in Cologne. During her multiple trips to Afghanistan she has produced a variety of press reports, a short documentary about a school project near Kabul as well as a radio play for the WDR and SWR (regional German radio stations). She taught an advanced training course for Afghan journalists in Herat in 2004. Since 2006 she has been setting up the journalists network KALIMA in Afghanistan. This is a news agency aiming at a constructive inter-cultural dialogue by providing background information on socio-cultural topics.

**Rona Yussof Mansury**, Board Member "Afghan Women Society" (Afghanischer Frauenverein)

Rona Yussof Mansury was born in 1945 in Kabul / Afghanistan. From 1981-1998 she was an active member of the Organisation for Struggling Unity and Liberation of Afghanistan (OSULA). Since 1992 she is the co-founder and board member of the humanitarian organisation "Afghanischer Frauenverein" (Afghan Women Society). In December 2001, she was a delegate for the Afghan king at the Bonn Conference on Afghanistan. Since 2001 she has given numerous lectures in Germany on the situation of women in Afghanistan.

**Seyran Ateş**, Women's Rights Activist and Author

Seyran Ateş, Lawyer (Attorney), writer und publicist, born in 1963 in Istanbul, lives in Berlin since 1969. She studied law in the Free University, Berlin and worked as an autonomous lawyer from 1997-Mai 2009. In Germany, Seyran Ateş is one of the most important voices in the struggle against forced marriage and honour killings. She has been fighting for many years for forced marriage to be made legally punitive. Seyran Ateş is a member of the plenary committee of the German-Islamic conference and the summit conference for national integration that has been set up by the ministry of interior. For her work for the Rights of Women and Freedom in a Multicultural Society she gets many Awards. The Federal Cross of Merit of Germany and the Order of Merit of Berlin are just two of them.

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### **European Foundation for Democracy**

The European Foundation for Democracy (EFD) is a policy and advocacy institute based in Brussels and dedicated to defending democratic values, supporting democratic reforms and countering the ideologies that drive terrorism. EFD aims to unite organisations and individuals from different religious and ethnic backgrounds to support the values of open societies: universal human rights, freedom of conscience, and pluralism of peaceful ideas. EFD's Afghanistan Programme aims to contribute to reforms and change in Afghanistan and to encourage debate on the role that Europe can play to support Afghanistan.

### **Independent Afghan Women Association e.V.**

The "Independent Afghan Women Association e.V." (IAWA) advocates and supports the empowerment of girls and women in Afghanistan. Under the patronage of Luise Scherf, wife of Bremen's former mayor Henning Scherf, IAWA helps to provide education as well as builds and reconstructs schools with unrestricted access for young girls and women. Through the assistance of IAWA three schools for over 9000 students have been established.

### **KALIMA**

KALIMA would like to promote the dialogue between Afghanistan and Germany. Since the end of the Taliban regime many German organisations and institutions have invested in the development of a free press in Afghanistan. KALIMA would like to give this generation of journalists the chance to consolidate their trade by producing of reports, contributions and background information on-site and to inform the German public first hand about culture, society and religion. Germany has become important to the Afghans not least since the deployment of the German armed forces and the resulting increase in safety across the country. Considering that intercultural dialogue is now more important than ever before, this initiative can be seen as basis for further development and collaboration. KALIMA aims to show foreign values, attitudes and opinions in their context. A direct insight into each other's culture should allow a more differentiated perception.

### **"Afghanischer Frauenverein" (Afghan Women Society)**

The "Afghanischer Frauenverein" (Afghan Women Society) is a humanitarian organisation based in Germany that supports the reconstruction and peace-building efforts in Afghanistan. Its projects in Afghanistan are supported by 110 local staff – from teachers to construction workers. The Afghan Women Society was founded 1992 by Afghans living in Germany in order to support the people of Afghanistan. The patron of the Afghan Women Society is the famous German writer and intellectual Roger Willemsen.

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