

Afghan mothers' names allowed on birth certificates

22nd September, 2020



Women's rights campaigners in Afghanistan are celebrating a rare victory. For the first time, the names of mothers will be put on their children's birth certificates, alongside the father's name. Mothers' names will also be put on national identity cards. The Afghan government

has just announced a new law to allow this. For hundreds of years, only the father's name was allowed on the birth certificate. Campaigners in Afghanistan started their campaign in 2017. They used social media to fight for the right of women to have their names on official documents. It is common in Afghanistan for a woman's name not to be included on wedding invitations.

Afghanistan's Vice-President said: "The decision to include the mother's name on the ID card is a big step forward for women's rights." The founder of the #WhereIsMyName campaign, Laleh Osmany, said the law was good. She said: "By printing her name, we give the mother power. The law now gives her certain powers to be a mother who can, without the presence of a man, get documents for her children, enroll her children in school, and travel." Another campaigner said: "My feeling of happiness may seem ridiculous for women in other countries, but when we live in a society where women are physically and spiritually excluded, achieving such basic rights is a big and difficult task."

Sources:
womensagenda.com.au / abc.net.au / gandhara.rferl.org

Writing

All people will have equal rights one day. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

women's rights / campaigners / rare / victory / birth / certificate / social media / name decision / big steps / powers / documents / school / travel / happiness / excluded

True / False

- a) Women's rights campaigners celebrated a rare victory. T / F
- b) Mothers' names will not be put on national ID cards. T / F
- c) A campaign to get mothers' names on documents started in 2007. T / F
- d) It isn't common for women's names to be on Afghan wedding invitations. T / F
- e) Afghanistan's vice-president said the new law was a step backwards. T / F
- f) Afghan mothers can now enroll their children in schools. T / F
- g) A campaigner said other women might not understand her happiness. T / F
- h) A campaigner said achieving basic rights was difficult. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. campaigners | a. existence |
| 2. alongside | b. permitted |
| 3. announced | c. left out |
| 4. allowed | d. next to |
| 5. common | e. silly |
| 6. step | f. declared |
| 7. power | g. move |
| 8. presence | h. activists |
| 9. ridiculous | i. control |
| 10. excluded | j. normal |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about Afghanistan?
- b) What do you think of birth certificates?
- c) What information is on your birth certificate?
- d) How important is this "victory" for women in Afghanistan?
- e) Why was only the father's name put on birth certificates?
- f) What official documents is your name on?
- g) What are birth certificates for?
- h) What advice do you have for women in Afghanistan?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. celebrating a rare | a. rights |
| 2. alongside the father's | b. for women's rights |
| 3. national | c. invitations |
| 4. fight for the right | d. name |
| 5. wedding | e. in school |
| 6. a big step forward | f. of women |
| 7. The law now gives her certain | g. a man |
| 8. without the presence of | h. victory |
| 9. enroll her children | i. powers |
| 10. achieving such basic | j. identity cards |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How much of a step forward is this for Afghan women?
- Where are women less equal in your country?
- How does a society suffer when women are excluded?
- What was the last thing that made you happy?
- What three adjectives best describe this story?
- How would you feel if you didn't have equal rights?
- What questions would you like to ask the Afghan government?

Spelling

- sgnerpmaaic in Afghanistan
- celebrating a rare ictvory
- national dentiity cards
- lolawed on the birth certificate
- names on official ocmdneuts
- wedding aviinittons
- The ecisidon to include the mother's name
- The law now gives her etrcaain powers
- without the resenpce of a man
- My feeling of happiness may seem duicilorus
- physically and spiritually xulcdeed
- achieving such basic igrths

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. f	4. b	5. j
6. g	7. i	8. a	9. e	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Free Speech

You think the right to free speech is most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what isn't so important about with their rights. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these rights (and why): legal advice, vote or fresh air.

Role B – Legal Advice

You think the right to legal advice is most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what isn't so important about with their rights. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these rights (and why): free speech, vote or fresh air.

Role C – Vote

You think the right to vote is most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what isn't so important about with their rights. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these rights (and why): legal advice, free speech or fresh air.

Role D – Fresh Air

You think the right to fresh air is most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what isn't so important about with their rights. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these rights (and why): legal advice, vote or free speech.

Speaking – Rights

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| • Legal advice | • Free speech |
| • Vote | • Work |
| • Education | • Not be punched |
| • Fresh air | • Follow a religion |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.