

# SIGAR

Special Inspector General for  
Afghanistan Reconstruction

JAN 30  
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QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS





## **The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008 (Pub. L. No. 110-181) established the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).**

SIGAR's oversight mission, as defined by the legislation, is to provide for the independent and objective

- conduct and supervision of audits and investigations relating to the programs and operations funded with amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.
- leadership and coordination of, and recommendations on, policies designed to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the administration of the programs and operations, and to prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse in such programs and operations.
- means of keeping the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense fully and currently informed about problems and deficiencies relating to the administration of such programs and operation and the necessity for and progress on corrective action.

Afghanistan reconstruction includes any major contract, grant, agreement, or other funding mechanism entered into by any department or agency of the U.S. government that involves the use of amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

As required by the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2018 (Pub. L. No. 115-91), this quarterly report has been prepared in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

Source: Pub. L. No. 110-181, National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008, 1/28/2008; Pub. L. No. 115-91, National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2018, 12/12/2017.

### **Cover photo:**

A Taliban fighter stands guard as Afghan refugees line up to register in a camp in Torkham, Afghanistan, November 2023. (Ebrahim Noroozi/AP)



SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR  
AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

To Congress, the Secretaries of State and Defense, and the American people, I am pleased to submit SIGAR's 62nd quarterly report on the status of U.S. assistance to Afghanistan.

This quarter, SIGAR's work featured prominently in two congressional hearings on the Biden administration's policy in Afghanistan. At the first hearing, held on November 14, I testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee about the Taliban's continued aid diversion and interference with U.S. assistance to Afghanistan, and about SIGAR's ongoing work. U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Thomas West, U.S. Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights Rina Amiri, and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Asia Michael Schiffer were invited to testify at that hearing, but according to Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX), they refused to appear alongside me. Instead, they testified at a second hearing, held on January 11, before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia. At that hearing, Members of Congress questioned them about concerns SIGAR has raised about the Taliban's diversion of aid, the Afghan Fund, and the State Department's lack of cooperation with SIGAR.

My appearance was the 28th time I have testified before Congress since being appointed special inspector general in 2012. Both hearings dramatically illustrated the continuing need for vigorous oversight of U.S. assistance to Afghanistan by an independent oversight body such as SIGAR. The two hearings also highlighted the continuing concern the House Foreign Affairs Committee has with the absence of a clear explanation by the Administration of how it is protecting more than \$11 billion in continued U.S. assistance to the Afghan people. Over the next few months, our office will issue a number of reports requested by Chairman McCaul which should help to answer many of the questions he and other members of the committee raised at both hearings.

For the first time, this quarterly report includes a discussion of indicators in Afghanistan that helps answer the critical question of whether, two and a half years after the U.S. withdrawal, things are getting better or worse for the Afghan people. Although some areas such as counternarcotics show improvement, most social, economic, and humanitarian indicators are clearly worsening for Afghanistan.

In January, SIGAR issued a report in response to a 2023 request from Chairman McCaul that examined the operations, policies, and safeguards of the \$3.5 billion Afghan Fund, a charitable trust established for the benefit of the Afghan people. SIGAR found several areas of concern, including a lack of specific safeguards to prevent Taliban diversion, ambiguity regarding potential conflicts of interest of Fund trustees, and the inadequacy of the State Department's process for vetting trustees.

In December, two former Afghan government officials, Mir Rahman Rahmani and his son, Ajmal Rahmani, were sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department's



Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) for their widespread involvement in international corruption, following their nomination by SIGAR under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.

SIGAR issued 11 products this quarter, including this quarterly report and six financial audits of U.S.-funded projects in Afghanistan that identified \$540,756 in questioned costs as a result of internal-control deficiencies and noncompliance issues by U.S. government contractors.

SIGAR also issued one performance audit report and one evaluation report, examining U.S. agency vetting of implementing partners and UN cash shipments to Afghanistan. The performance audit found that the USAID Mission to Afghanistan complied with vetting requirements, but USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance did not. The evaluation found that the UN has purchased and transported some \$2.9 billion in cash to implement humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan since August 2021. Unless Afghanistan can overcome the consequences of sanctions, alleviate ongoing currency shortages, or develop sufficient internal controls and infrastructure to allow for digital transactions, it will remain dependent on these UN shipments of U.S. cash to fund the implementation of humanitarian operations. Our report also found that these cash shipments benefit the Taliban.

As shown by this evaluation, with the Taliban in power, SIGAR's independent and objective oversight of ongoing U.S. government funding and activities to support the people of Afghanistan is more vital than ever.

SIGAR's work to date has identified approximately \$3.97 billion in savings to the U.S. taxpayer. Thanks to the support of Congress and other stakeholders, SIGAR will continue to protect U.S. funds in Afghanistan in 2024.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John F. Sopko', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

John F. Sopko



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“Our longstanding interests are as important as ever: to ensure Afghanistan is never again used for attacks against the U.S. and its allies and to reduce Afghanistan’s dependency on U.S. assistance.”

—*State Department, Afghanistan Integrated Country Strategy, October 2023*



# 1 WHAT THE UNITED STATES IS DOING IN AFGHANISTAN



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An Afghan girl eats a nutrition supplement distributed by the World Food Programme. (Photo by WFP in Afghanistan)

WHAT THE UNITED STATES IS DOING IN AFGHANISTAN

The United States remains the largest donor to the Afghan people.<sup>1</sup> Since U.S. forces withdrew from Afghanistan in August 2021, the United States has appropriated or otherwise made available \$11.21 billion in assistance to Afghanistan and to Afghan refugees, as shown in Table I.1. This includes nearly \$2.63 billion in U.S. appropriations for Afghanistan assistance, largely for humanitarian and development aid, and \$3.5 billion transferred to the Afghan Fund that could be used to recapitalize Afghanistan’s central bank and for related purposes. In addition, the United States obligated more than \$5.08 billion in fiscal years 2022 and 2023 for the Department of Defense to transport, house, and feed Afghan evacuees.

The United States also continues to respond to humanitarian crises in Afghanistan as they evolve. This quarter, Pakistan’s government initiated its “Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan” with the intent to deport all undocumented Afghans, up to 1.3 million people.<sup>2</sup> Some 493,000 Afghans have returned to Afghanistan since September, either through deportation or coercion, straining existing resources.<sup>3</sup> Returning Afghans need food, water, health services, legal aid, explosive risk ordnance education, protection, and shelter, placing further weight on the overwhelmed humanitarian system. The UN’s International Organization for Migration (IOM) organized a \$75.7

TABLE I.1

U.S. ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN AND DOD AFGHAN REFUGEE ASSISTANCE SINCE AUGUST 2021	
U.S. Appropriations for Afghanistan Assistance October 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023 <sup>1</sup>	\$2,625,100,000
Department of Defense, Obligation of Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid Appropriations for Operation Allies Welcome to September 30, 2022 <sup>2</sup>	5,083,200,000
U.S.-Authorized Transfers of Afghan Central Bank Assets to the Fund for the Afghan People <sup>3</sup>	3,500,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11,208,300,000</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. government funding appropriated or otherwise made available for all Security, Development, Humanitarian, and Agency Operations accounts and Agency Operations accounts as presented in Table F.10, U.S. Appropriations on page 137.  
<sup>2</sup> DOD, response to SIGAR data call, 1/9/2024 and 4/18/2023. Most recent data for the period under review. This figure does not account for other agency assistance that may have been provided for the transport, evacuation, processing, and resettlement of Afghan refugees. This figure includes \$100.00 million in committed but not yet obligated funds.  
<sup>3</sup> Transfer of Da Afghanistan Bank reserves held at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to the Switzerland-based entity.

# WHAT THE UNITED STATES IS DOING IN AFGHANISTAN

million humanitarian response for returnees in 2023–2024.<sup>4</sup> State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) provided \$3.6 million to Border Consortium partners for activities that support newly returned Afghans at border reception and transit centers. PRM is also responsible for tracking any Afghans eligible for resettlement to the United States who may be or have been deported to Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup>

As shown in Table I.2, some \$1.82 billion of the nearly \$2.63 billion appropriated for assistance to Afghanistan since the end of FY 2021 has gone toward humanitarian assistance, representing 69% of the total. Another \$409 million, or 16% of the total, went for development assistance.

TABLE I.2

U.S. APPROPRIATIONS FOR AFGHANISTAN ASSISTANCE OCTOBER 1, 2021, TO DECEMBER 31, 2023 (\$ MILLIONS)				
Funding Category	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY24Q1	Total
Humanitarian	\$1,077.40	\$656.20	\$83.14	\$1,816.74
Development	217.69	185.85	5.31	408.85
Agency Operations	229.19	57.35	13.01	299.54
Security	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,624.28</b>	<b>\$899.39</b>	<b>\$101.46</b>	<b>\$2,625.13</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.  
Source: SIGAR Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 1/30/2024, Appendix A.

Since 2021, State and USAID have used these funds to restart and begin new programs to address critical needs of the Afghan people in several key sectors—health, education, agriculture, food security, and livelihoods—and are also supporting civil society and media, focusing on women, girls, and broad human rights protections. These efforts are being implemented through nongovernmental organizations, international organizations such as UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP), and other implementing partners.<sup>6</sup>

For example, USAID and State have obligated over \$80 million in humanitarian assistance in the first quarter of FY 2024, as shown in Figure I.3. More than half of these funds, or some \$60 million, will be disbursed to IOM and UNICEF to provide food, health care, and shelter, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene services for Afghan refugees, returnees, and other vulnerable persons, among other things. Other funds are going to implement life-saving health activities; to provide disaster assistance; and to deliver livelihoods programing and skills training such as courses to build literacy, and business knowledge.<sup>7</sup>



# WHAT THE UNITED STATES IS DOING IN AFGHANISTAN

TABLE I.3

<b>HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR AFGHANISTAN – AMOUNTS COMMITTED AND OBLIGATED, FY 2022 TO FY 2024 Q1 (\$ MILLIONS)</b>					
<b>Implementing Partners</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>FY24Q1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance</b>					
Implementing Partners Other Than UN Agencies	Agriculture; Food Assistance-Cash Transfers; Local, Regional, and International Procurement; Economic Recovery and Market Systems (ERMS); Health; Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA); Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA); Natural Hazards and Technological Risks; Nutrition; Protection; Shelter and Settlements; Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)	\$78.43	\$167.90	\$3.00	\$249.33
UN FAO	Agriculture; MPCA; HCIMA	30.50	0.50	0.50	31.50
IOM	Shelter and Settlements; WASH	63.06	0.43	31.00	94.49
UNICEF	Health; HCIMA; Nutrition; Protection; MPCA; WASH	33.65	35.25	30.25	99.15
UN OCHA	HCIMA	1.00	1.20	1.20	3.40
UNFPA	Health; Protection; HCIMA	2.36	8.31	-	10.67
WFP	Food Assistance-Cash Transfers; Vouchers; Local, Regional, and International Procurement; Logistics Support; Nutrition; Program Support*	460.72	422.10	-	882.82
WHO	HCIMA; Health; WASH	1.00	7.00	-	8.00
	Program Support	0.62	0.78	0.90	2.30
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$671.34</b>	<b>\$643.47</b>	<b>\$66.85</b>	<b>\$1,381.66</b>
<b>State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration</b>					
Implementing Partners Other Than UN Agencies	Education; Food Security; Health Livelihoods; Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS); Protection; Program Support	\$70.75	\$67.15	\$9.06	\$146.96
IOM	Health and Program Support-Kosovo	16.50	24.50	-	41.00
UNHCR	Education; ERMS; HCIMA; Health; Logistics Support; MPCA; Protection; Shelter and Settlements; WASH	116.20	87.40	5.00	208.60
UNICEF	Education; Health; Nutrition; Protection; WASH	9.30	6.65	-	15.95
UNFPA	Health; Protection	52.39	35.55	-	87.94
WHO	Health	2.81	-	-	2.81
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$267.95</b>	<b>\$221.25</b>	<b>\$14.06</b>	<b>\$503.26</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$939.29</b>	<b>\$864.72</b>	<b>\$80.91</b>	<b>\$1,884.92</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded. \*USAID, BHA obligated ESF funds for WFP programming presented above. Programs without figures in the committed or obligated amounts columns are programs that continue to operate on previously committed or obligated funds but for which there were no new amounts committed or obligated in FY 2022, FY 2023, and/or FY24Q1.

Source: USAID, BHA, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/10/2024; State, PRM, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/16/2024; USAID, "Afghanistan – Complex Emergency," Fact Sheet #9, Fiscal Year 2022, 9/23/2022; USAID, "Afghanistan – Complex Emergency," Fact Sheet #3, Fiscal Year 2023, 8/29/2023; USAID, "Afghanistan – Complex Emergency," Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year 2024, 12/22/2023; USAID, BHA, response to SIGAR data call to report adjustments to FY 2022 data for full year as reported in Fact Sheet #9, 10/12/2023; State, PRM, response to SIGAR data call to report adjustments to FY 2022 data for full year as reported in Fact Sheet #9, 10/11/2023.

USAID has obligated some \$630 million to the Economic Support Fund and Global Health Programs account since October 1, 2021, supporting 37 programs, as shown in Figure I.4. About a third of these funds,

# WHAT THE UNITED STATES IS DOING IN AFGHANISTAN

or \$210 million, support economic growth and public health programs in Afghanistan. This quarter, USAID obligated nearly \$20 million to two active health programs. An additional \$3 million was obligated to support the Afghanistan Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Activity, which supports routine third-party oversight for ongoing USAID programs in the country.<sup>8</sup>

TABLE I.4

USAID PROGRAMS (ECONOMIC SUPPORT FUND AND GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAMS), OBLIGATED, FY 2022 TO FY24Q1 (\$ MILLIONS)*					
USAID Managing Office	Activity	Obligated Amounts			
		FY 2022	FY 2023	FY24Q1	Total
Office of Social Services					
Keep Schools Open	Education	\$40.00	-	-	\$40.00
Urban Health Initiative (UHI) Program	Health	17.34	18.52	16.63	52.49
New DEWS (Disaster Early Warning System) Plus	Health	14.50	4.00	3.00	21.50
Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive (AFIAT)	Health	10.16	23.55	-	33.71
Consolidated Grant - COVID-19 Response	Health	6.00	-	-	6.00
Local Health Systems Sustainability (LHSS)	Health	5.15	2.85	-	8.00
Central Contraceptive Procurement (CCP)	Health	5.00	-	-	5.00
Global Health Supply Chain Management (GHSCM-PSM)	Health	5.00	-	-	5.00
Technical Capacity Building for the American University of Afghanistan	Education	4.51	-	-	4.51
Let Girls Learn Initiative and Girls' Education Challenge (GEC)	Education	4.00	-	-	4.00
SHOPS Plus	Health	0.86	-	-	0.86
DEWS Plus	Health	-	-	-	-
Strengthening Education in Afghanistan (SEA II)	Education	-	-	-	-
Accessible and Quality Basic Education (AQBE)	Education	-	31.70	-	31.70
Young Women Lead (YWL)	Education	-	4.94	-	4.94
Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan (SSSA)	Education	-	12.56	-	12.56
Total		\$112.52	\$98.12	\$19.63	\$230.27
Office of Program and Project Development					
Contributions to the Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund	Crosscutting (WASH + Econ. growth)	\$53.72	\$50.00	-	\$103.72
Afghanistan Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Activity (AMELA)		3.36	4.50	3.00	10.86
Total		\$57.08	\$54.50	\$3.00	\$114.58
Office of Infrastructure, Energy, and Engineering					
Rural Water Supply, Sanitation & Hygiene (Ru-WASH)	WASH	\$20.00	-	-	\$20.00
20M Watt Floating Solar - Naghlu	Power	0.70	-	-	0.70
Total		\$20.70	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$20.70

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# WHAT THE UNITED STATES IS DOING IN AFGHANISTAN

USAID PROGRAMS (ECONOMIC SUPPORT FUND AND GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAMS), OBLIGATED, FY 2022 TO FY24Q1 (CONTINUED)					
USAID Managing Office	Activity	Obligated Amounts			
		FY 2022	FY 2023	FY24Q1	Total
Office of Livelihoods					
Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security (SRL-FS)	Agriculture	\$40.00	-	-	\$40.00
Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity (ACEBA)	Economic growth	36.87	33.72	(3.47)	67.12
Afghanistan Value Chains Program	Agriculture	26.43	23.78	-	50.21
Afghanistan Marketing Program Agriculture	Agriculture	15.00	-	-	15.00
Extractive Technical Assistance by the U.S. Geological Service Economic Growth	Economic growth	-	-	-	-
Livelihood Advancement for Marginalized Populations (LAMP)	Economic growth	5.00	-	-	5.00
Carpet and Jewelry Value Chains	Economic growth	2.82	2.50	-	5.32
Total		\$126.12	\$60.00	\$(3.47)	\$182.65
Office of Democracy, Gender, and Rights					
Enabling Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls	Crosscutting	\$21.29	-	-	\$21.29
Safeguarding Civic Rights and Media Freedoms in Afghanistan	Civil society	7.22	11.38	-	18.60
Conflict Mitigation Assistance for Civilians (COMAC)	Aid to conflict-affected Afghans	5.00	5.00	-	10.00
Supporting Media Freedom and Access to Information for Afghan Citizens	Civil society	3.25	1.00	-	4.25
Supporting Transformation for Afghanistan's Recovery (STAR)	Livelihood assistance	-	18.34	-	18.34
Promoting Conflict Resolution, Peace Building, and Enhanced Governance	Good governance	-	-	-	-
Initiative to Strengthen Local Administration	Good governance	0.40	-	-	0.40
Women's Scholarship Endowment	Crosscutting (Gender + Edu)	-	-	-	-
Total		\$37.16	\$35.72	\$0.00	\$72.88
Executive Office					
ISC to hire former Afghan FSNs		\$6.02	\$3.14	-	\$9.16
Total		\$6.02	\$3.14	\$0.00	\$9.16
Office of Financial Management					
Audits AMP (Agriculture Marketing Program) 2021	Financial Audit	\$0.18	-	-	\$0.18
Total		\$0.18	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.18
TOTAL (37 programs)		\$359.78	\$251.48	\$19.16	\$630.42

Source: USAID Transaction Detail Report, 1/4/2023, 10/9/2023, and 1/13/2024.

Note: Numbers have been rounded. \*Programs without figures in the obligated amounts column had no new amounts obligated in FY 2022, FY 2023, and/or FY24Q1.

For more information on active USAID programs as of January 13, 2024, see pages 61–85.

The Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund changed its name from the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund on July 21, 2023.

# WHAT THE UNITED STATES IS DOING IN AFGHANISTAN

In 2022, the United States transferred \$3.5 billion in Afghan central bank assets previously frozen in the United States to the Swiss-based Fund for the Afghan People or Afghan Fund. Although no disbursements have yet been made, the Fund is meant to recapitalize Afghanistan's central bank, keep Afghanistan current on debt payments to international financial institutions to preserve its eligibility for development assistance, and pay for critically needed imported goods.<sup>9</sup>

According to the Fund's website, the Fund's balance stood at \$3.69 billion as of the end of September 2023, including interest accrued. This quarter, SIGAR examined the operations, policies, and safeguards of the Afghan Fund. SIGAR identified several areas of concern including a lack of specific safeguards to prevent Taliban diversion, ambiguity regarding potential conflicts of interest of Fund trustees, and the inadequacy of the State Department's process for vetting trustees. A more detailed summary of SIGAR's report can be found on page 102.

Despite the lack of a presence in Afghanistan, the United States remains strongly engaged in the country.



# WHAT THE UNITED STATES IS DOING IN AFGHANISTAN

## INTRODUCTION ENDNOTES

- 1 State, SCA, response to SIGAR vetting, 7/14/2023.
- 2 IOM, Border Consortium Appeal, 11/8/2023, p. 2.
- 3 UNHCR, CORE Pakistan-Afghanistan Emergency Response, 12/21/2023; CARE et. al., “Almost 500,000 returning Afghans in desperate need of food, shelter, and employment to survive winter, warn aid agencies,” via ReliefWeb, 12/14/2023; UNHCR, CORE Pakistan-Afghanistan Emergency Response #8, 1/4/2024.
- 4 IOM, Border Consortium Appeal, 11/8/2023, p. 3.
- 5 State, PRM, response to SIGAR data call, 12/15/2023; State, PRM, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/12/2024.
- 6 State, SCA, response to SIGAR data call, 3/16/2022; State, SCA, response to SIGAR vetting, 4/13/2022; USAID, Afghanistan–Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #3, FY 2023, 8/29/2023, p. 7.
- 7 USAID, Afghanistan–Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #1, FY 2024, 12/22/2023, p. 7.
- 8 USAID Transaction Detail Report, 1/4/2023, 10/9/2023, and 1/13/2024.
- 9 Treasury, response to SIGAR data call, 12/13/2022; Treasury, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/11/2023; Treasury and State press release, “Joint Statement by U.S. Treasury and State Department: The United States and Partners Announce Establishment of Fund for the People of Afghanistan,” 9/14/2022; State, “Department Press Briefing – September 14, 2022,” 9/14/2022; Fund for the Afghan People, “Press Statement on October 2, 2023 Meeting,” 10/2/2023.

“We must remain resolute and support Afghan women and girls. If we do not continue to stand up for the rights of Afghan women, we put at peril women’s rights everywhere.”

— *U.S. Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights Rina Amiri*