

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales

IAW ACTION SHEET - January 2009



A report in *The Times* (UK 26 December 2008) states: *The Taliban have ordered the closure of all girls' schools in the war-ravaged Swat district of Pakistan and warned parents and teachers of dire consequences if the ban is flouted.*

In an announcement made in mosques and broadcast on radio, the militant group set a deadline of January 15 for its order to be obeyed or it would blow up school buildings and attack schoolgirls. It also told women not to set foot outside their homes without being fully covered.

"Female education is against Islamic teachings and spreads vulgarity in society," Shah Dauran, leader of a group that has established control over a large part of Swat district in the North West Frontier Province, declared this week.

Teachers said that they had little choice but to comply. The Taliban have destroyed more than 125 girls' schools in the area in the past year. Swat, once a relatively liberal area and a popular tourist destination, has in the past few years become a heartland for Pakistan's Islamic militancy, which fashions itself on the conservative Taliban movement in Afghanistan.

On behalf of the Alliance, President Rosy Weiss is taking the attached letter to the NGO coordination caucus acting during the 53rd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Meanwhile action can be taken now by all IAW members – Affiliate and Associate organisations and Individual Members:

- Urge your government to add its voice to the public protest.
- Call on other NGOs that you have contact with to take similar action.
- Take this issue to the media.
- Check out websites to keep updated on this issue.

Please advise Secretary-General Lene Pind iawsec@womenalliance.org of any action that you are taking.

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You can find this IAW *Action Sheet* also on the IAW website: <http://www.womenalliance.org>