



PREMIER OF SASKATCHEWAN

LEGISLATIVE BUILDING  
REGINA, CANADA S4S 0B3

April 20, 2009

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Langevin Block  
80 Wellington Street  
OTTAWA ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

I am writing to urge you, in the strongest possible terms, to continue pressing the Afghan government to reverse the unacceptable provisions of its new Personal Status Law which take a number of fundamental human rights away from Shia women in that country.

Like the vast majority of Canadians, Saskatchewan people have strongly supported the efforts of our Canadian Forces in Afghanistan. We are proud that our brave men and women have played a key role to secure freedom for the Afghans from the oppressive Taliban regime and improve human rights in that country.

This effort has come at a huge cost. 117 Canadian soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of freedom and justice in Afghanistan. That's why this latest move to strip basic rights away from some women in that country is so offensive to Canadians. This new law is a huge step backward and, as you recently stated, "antithetical to our mission in Afghanistan."

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It is a tragic irony that the latest soldier to die in Afghanistan was a woman – Trooper Karine Blais. Any effort to restrict the rights of women in Afghanistan is an affront to her sacrifice and the sacrifice of all of our Canadian Forces personnel in that country.

I note that President Karzai is now saying that he intends to change the provision in the law that legalizes rape within marriage for Shia Muslims. I urge you and your government to continue your efforts to ensure this and other provisions which restrict human rights for women in Afghanistan are repealed, and that Canada continues to make every effort to ensure the advancement of human rights, justice and equality for all of the people of Afghanistan. Our national government must remain every bit as vigilant in this pursuit as our soldiers serving in Afghanistan.

Thank you for your attention to this most important matter.

Sincerely,

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Brad Wall  
Premier

