

## **Afghan Women's Law!**

"Degrading to ALL woman throughout the world!!"

Some 300 women gathered on the streets of Afghanistan's capital this week to protest a controversial new law that critics say legalizes marital rape and restricts a woman's right to work outside the home.

According to the BBC, police held back a group of 1,000 counter-demonstrators who surrounded the women in Kabul Wednesday, some throwing stones and shouting "Death to the slaves of Christians!"

The new law was passed by parliament and signed in March by President Hamid Karzai, who is up for reelection this year. According to media reports, it includes a provision that requires women to obtain their husband's permission for activities outside the home.

Most controversial is a clause that says "a wife is obliged to fulfill the sexual desires of her husband" and that a husband can demand sex with his wife every four days -- restrictions some have equated to opening the door to marital rape and harkening to

the type of harsh rules imposed during the Taliban era.



Fatima Hussein, 26, told the New York Times: "Whenever a man wants sex, we cannot refuse. ... It means a woman is a kind of property, to be used by the man in any way that he wants."

Abbas Noyan, a Shiite lawmaker who opposes the law, told the Associated Press he is hopeful it will be changed. But others are less sure, and even the country's minister of women's affairs, who is female, has declined to comment on the legislation thus far.

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