

**RELEASE IN FULL**

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**From:** Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 6, 2012 11:48 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** FW: Afghan president backs strict guidelines for women (AP)

FYI. Seeking more info.

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**From:** OpsNewsTicker  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 06, 2012 11:48 AM  
**To:** NEWS-Mahogany  
**Cc:** SES-O  
**Subject:** Afghan president backs strict guidelines for women (AP)

KABUL (AP) - Afghanistan's president has endorsed a "code of conduct" issued by an influential council of clerics that activists say represent a giant step backward for women's rights in the country.

President Hamid Karzai's Tuesday endorsement of the Ullema Council's document, which allows husbands to beat wives under certain circumstances and encourages segregation of the sexes, is seen as part of his outreach to insurgents like the Taliban.

Both the U.S. and Karzai hope that the Taliban can be brought into negotiations to end the country's decade-long war.

But activists say they're worried that gains made by women since 2001 may be lost in the process.

Karzai said that the document issued Friday was in keeping with Islam and did not restrict women.

*NewsTickers alert senior Department officials to breaking news. This item appears as it did in its original publication and does not contain analysis or commentary by Department sources.*