

Afghanistan: Taliban burn 'immoral' musical instruments

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IMAGE SOURCE,
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Image caption,
The Taliban has taken aim at instruments after beauty salons

By Kelly Ng

BBC News

The Taliban have burned musical instruments in Afghanistan, claiming music "causes moral corruption".

Thousands of dollars worth of musical equipment went up in smoke on a bonfire on Saturday in western Herat province.

Since taking power in 2021, the Taliban have imposed numerous restrictions, including on playing music in public.

Ahmad Sarmast, Afghanistan National Institute of Music founder, likened their actions to "cultural genocide and musical vandalism".

"The people of Afghanistan have been denied artistic freedom...

The burning of musical instruments in Herat is just a small example of the cultural genocide that is taking place in Afghanistan under the leadership of the Taliban," Dr Sarmast, who is now based in Portugal, told the BBC.

- **Afghan music school falls silent under Taliban rule**

Some of the items set ablaze in Herat included a guitar, a harmonium and a tabla - a kind of drum - as well as amplifiers and speakers, according to images online. Many of these had been seized from wedding venues in the city.

An official at the Taliban's Vice and Virtue Ministry said playing music would "cause the youth to go astray".

A similar bonfire of instruments was organised by the Taliban on 19 July. Its government posted photos of the blaze on Twitter at the time but did not say which part of the country it had taken place in. All forms of music were banned from social gatherings, TV, and radio while the Taliban were in power in Afghanistan from the mid-90s until 2001.

A music scene flourished in the two decades that followed, but the Taliban's return in August 2021 prompted many musicians to flee the country. **Singers and musicians still in the country are reported to have been subjected to beatings and discrimination.**

In the past two years, the Taliban have imposed other severe restrictions under their strict interpretation of Islamic law.

Women have borne the brunt of these harsh measures. The Taliban have decreed they should be dressed in a way that only reveals their eyes, and must be accompanied by a male relative if they are travelling more than 72km (45 miles).

Teenage girls and women have also been barred from entering school and university classrooms, gyms and parks.

Last week all hair and beauty salons across the country were ordered to shut on the Taliban's orders, after being deemed un-Islamic.

