



# **The Absence of Sound: Psychological Consequences of Cultural and Musical Suppression under Taliban Rule in Afghanistan**

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## **Abstract**

Since the Taliban's return to power in 2021, Afghanistan has undergone a widespread cultural suppression, marked by the banning of music, art, and other forms of public expression. This paper explores the psychological consequences of this deprivation, particularly among youth, artists, and displaced individuals. Drawing from theories in cultural psychology and trauma studies, the research investigates how the erasure of music and creative outlets has led to emotional numbness, depression, and a loss of identity among affected populations. Using qualitative data from interviews with Afghan musicians, artists, and students both within Afghanistan and in exile, the study reveals how the absence of cultural participation results in increased psychological distress and a profound sense of social disconnection. The findings suggest that forced silence is not merely a cultural issue but a psychological one, deeply affecting emotional resilience, self-expression, and collective identity. The paper calls for urgent international support for artistic resistance, cultural preservation in exile, and recognition of creative expression as a fundamental component of mental health and human rights.

**Keywords:** art suppression; expressive deprivation; mental health; music ban; trauma