

Issue 5

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# ARIANA

## *Magazine*

**INCLUDED:**

**FORMER CAPTAIN OF AFGHANISTAN'S  
NATIONAL WOMEN'S TEAM**

**FORMER AFGHAN STAR CONTESTANT-**

**SADIQA MADADGAR**

**THE LAST BOX-CAMERA IN AFGHANISTAN**

**ENTREPRENEUR- SULTAN GHANI**

**AFGHAN RIDDLES**

**AFGHAN-  
AMERICAN  
ACTRESS FROM TV  
SHOW-  
HOMELAND**

**AFGHANISTAN'S  
ONLY YOGA  
CENTRE**

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Photo credits: Ash Gupta  
Actress: Sitara Attaie



# Afghan-American author- Tamim Ansary

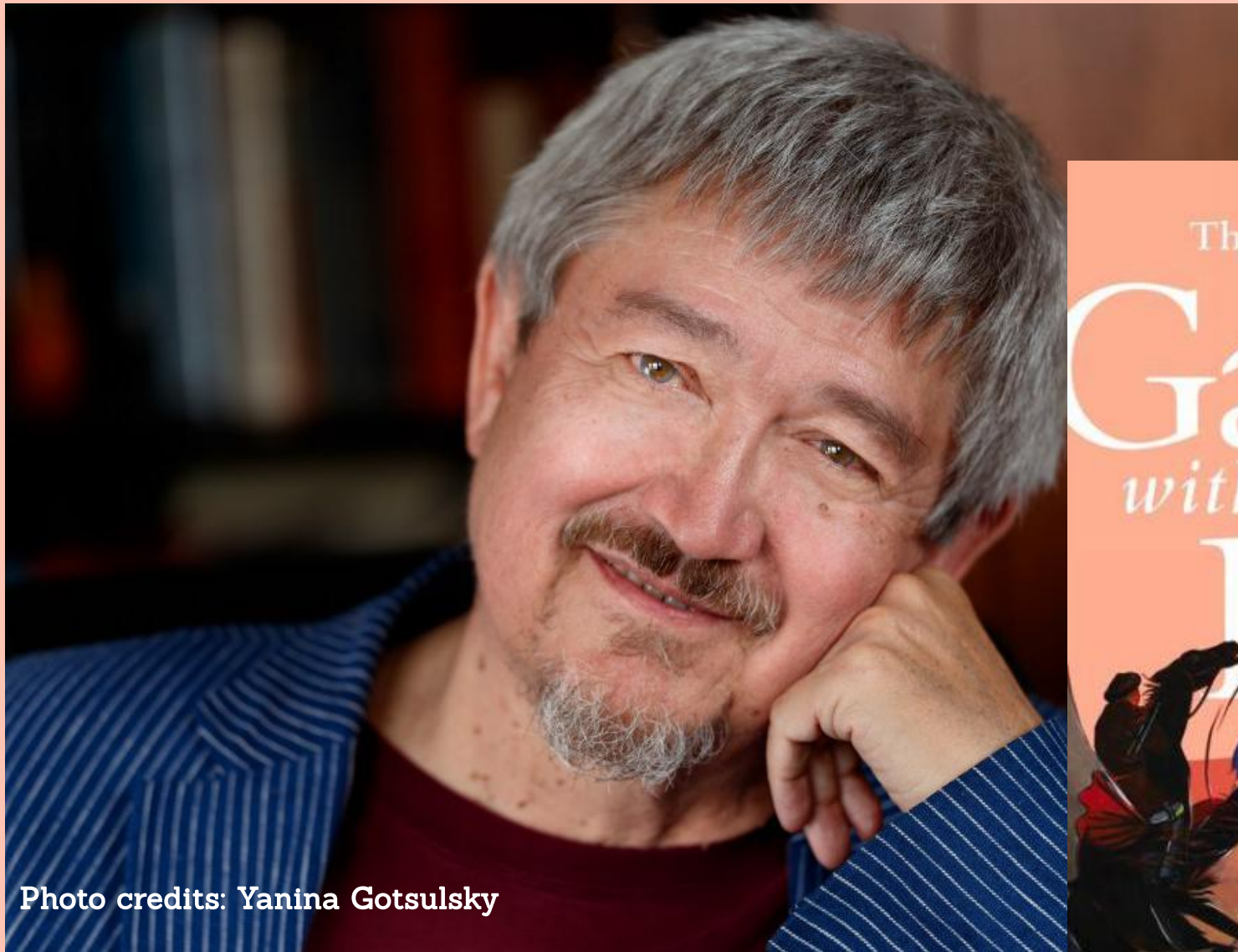
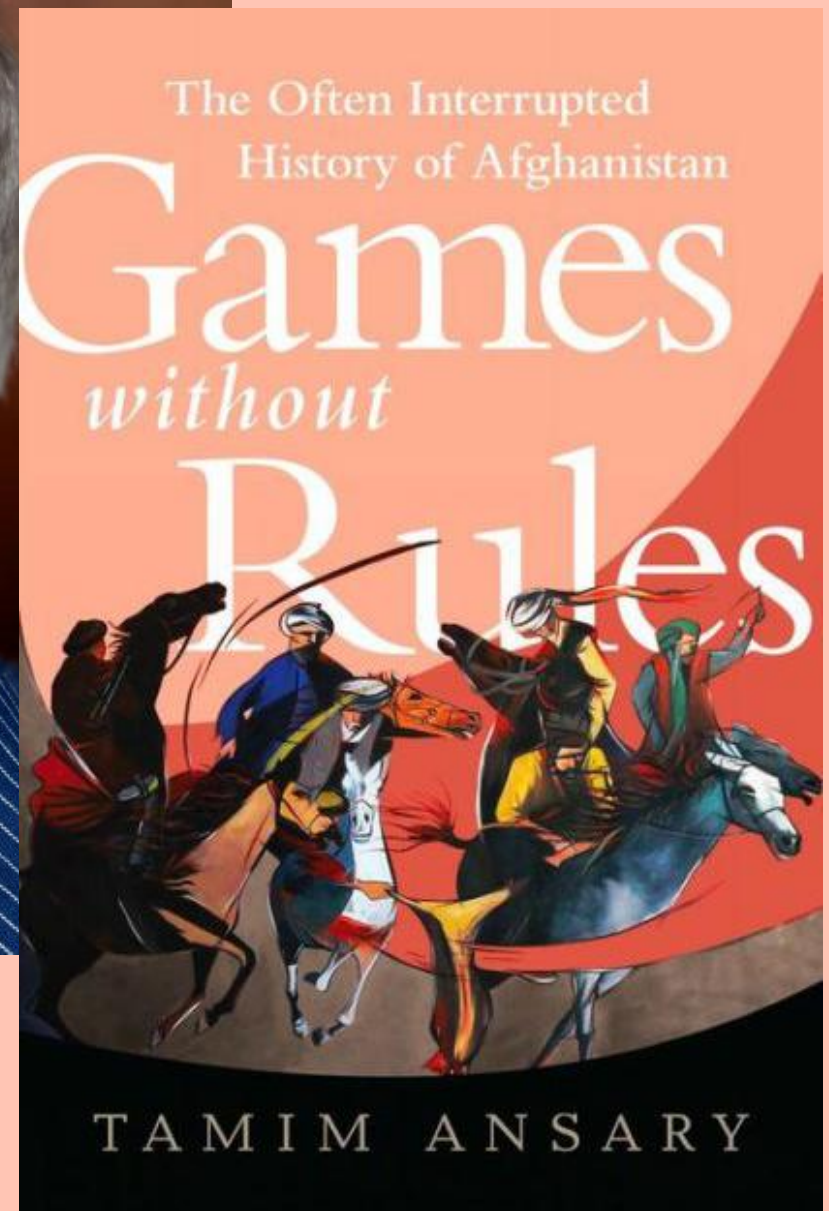


Photo credits: Yanina Gotsulsky

The story of Afghanistan, its history and its culture is encapsulated in the writings of Tamim Ansary. Tamim Ansary is an Afghan-American author and public speaker. He is the author of 'Games Without Rules: The Often-Interrupted History of Afghanistan' and of many other books concerning Afghan and Muslim history. His book, 'Games Without Rules' was nominated for a Northern California Booksellers Award the year it was published.



Ansary said: "I spent my first 16 years (give or take) in Afghanistan, and after that came to America and never saw Afghanistan again till I was in my early fifties. Those first years in Afghanistan, I wasn't really living in what the world called Afghanistan. I was living in the network of Ansary family compounds threaded through the city and had roots going back to Deh Yahya, a village near the city. My mother was that American woman, the first one to marry an Afghan and come to live with him in Afghanistan and for a while the only one in the country. The inner world of the Ansaries was all I knew but inside that world, I was not quite of it. In it but not of it. Otherness was a thing into which I was born and have never really escaped. Then there were the six years I lived in Lashkargah, now the heart of Talibanism, then the place where Americans were busy helping Afghans build dams and power plants and airports and whatnot. My sister says of that time: we were living both lives as fully as we ever did or could: we were Afghans with the Afghans and Americans with the Americans and totally part of each." Ansary then moved to America on scholarship to finish high school at a boarding school. He said: "Here three of us poor folk and 100 or so sons and daughters of privilege, kids from influential or well-to-do families: business tycoons, Hollywood people, media people political figures, etc. The shock of that transition from Afghanistan to America was too confusing to register when the world came back into focus, I was in college, and then out of college and living as part of that sixties movement known as the counterculture. The counterculture people liked to call themselves "freaks" and I felt like: finally! I've found my people. My father stayed in Afghanistan. My mother and siblings scattered about America. I was whoever I was able to invent. I would never again be anything but what I made of myself."

Ansary published 'Games Without Rules: The Often-Interrupted History of Afghanistan' in 2012 alongside many other books. He said he started writing when: "I was seven or so—I started writing pretty much as soon as I was actually able to form letters with a pencil. I started writing because I loved stories. I was always pestering people around me to tell me stories. More stories, please. More, more. I was so greedy for them, I exhausted even the many storytellers the Ansary family could provide. My grandmother sometimes got busy, my cousin Farid sometimes got tired of wracking his brains, even Asadullah Kaj-Kula ("Asadullah the Crooked-Hat") sometimes said: enough boy. Go amuse yourself for a change. At that point, if I wanted more stories I would have to write them myself. As it turns out, most of what I've written has been a memoir or history. My particular interest is in storytelling, and this is just how it has manifested. I realized many years ago that life is the fount of story, memoir is of more interest to me than fiction—because the most profound story isn't something you invent, it's something you discover. It's the story that is already there. That's the important point: the story is already there! It's in the facts. The other thing I would say is this: I'm interested in those zones where cultures and civilizations overlap—probably because my own psyche is one of those zones."

"He added: "I am worried about Afghanistan but I am also hopeful—depending on what happens to the world as a whole. The last time I was in Afghanistan, water was more of an issue than ever. But what can poor Afghanistan do to solve global environmental problems like this? It's going to take everybody from New York to Vladivostok to Beijing working together, and we don't seem to be on the verge of that just yet. I'm worried about the social issues as well. On the other hand, Afghans increasingly have access to all the same information circulating in the world that the rest of humanity had: in that sense, "the village" is gone. Even the Taliban are on Facebook. I left before the worst of the wars and came back after the worst had ended, but when people told me about the horrors they'd been through they even found things to laugh about...I once asked someone how she could tell stories from those days with such detachment and amusement, and she told me, "We have faith in God." So, we shall see. We shall see.."



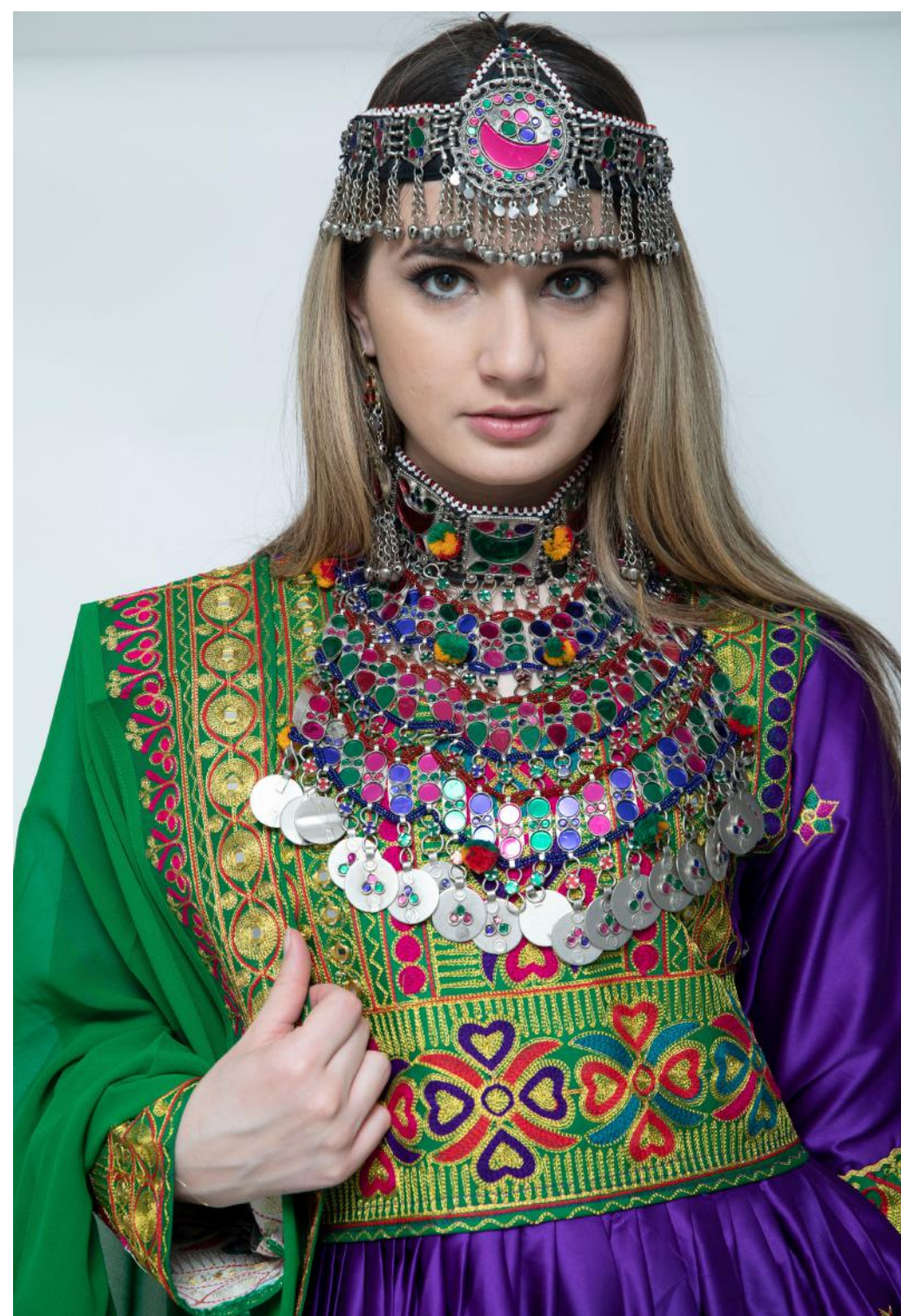


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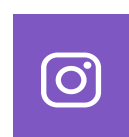


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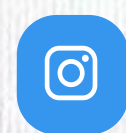


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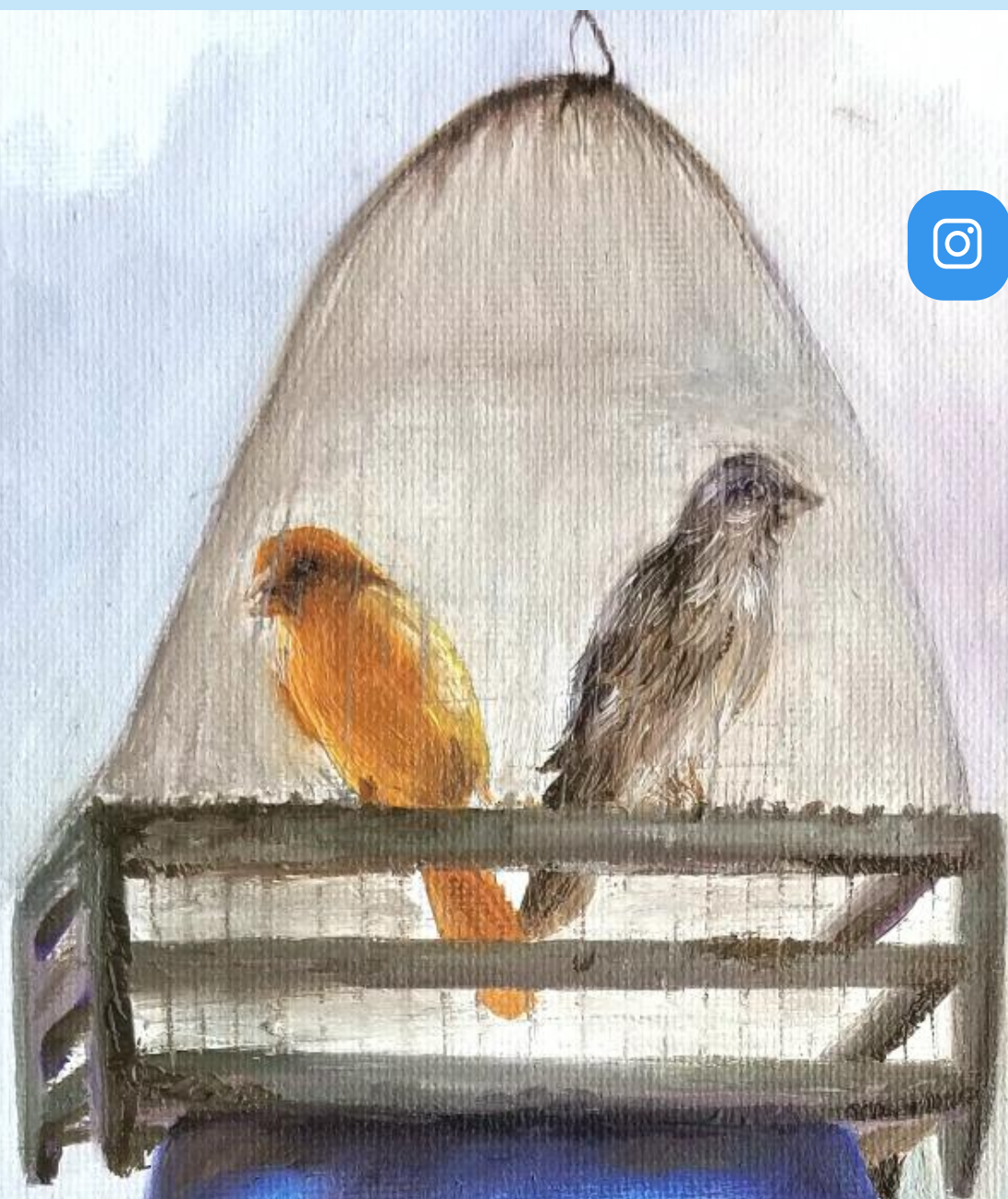


Mukhtar Amiry is an Afghan artist living in Toronto, Canada. Born in 1994, Amiry graduated from Mohammad Alam Faiz-zad High School in Kabul and continued his studies at Lawrence Academy of Massachusetts United States of America. He attended the art centre of Ghulam Mohammad Maimanagi and learned Realism style art for 3 years. Canvases and artworks of Mukhtar Amiry have been exhibited at numerous exhibitions in the United States and Europe.

During some of his exhibitions in the United States, Mukhtar Amiry observed the negative thoughts of the people towards Afghanistan and was inspired to paint pictures of the beauties of Afghanistan, especially Afghan women, on canvases in contrast to the media. To send a message to the world that Afghanistan and Afghans are a symbol of beauty and strength.



@Mukhtaramiryofficial





# The only Yoga centre in war-torn Afghanistan run by an Afghan woman



Photo credits: Sorin Furcoi

**Fakhria Momtaz, who set up a yoga centre in Afghanistan explains why women's wellbeing is important in a war-torn country.**

Fakhria Ibrahimy Momtaz, is the founder of Momtaz Host [www.momtaz.ws](http://www.momtaz.ws) and Momtaz Yoga Centre [www.momtaz.yoga](http://www.momtaz.yoga). She founded the Kabul yoga studio in 2017. The aim of yoga sessions is to support women to be healthy and confident. Students from all levels of life and education attend the yoga classes. Momtaz teaches Hatha Yoga which is about balancing the body and mind. The centre also provides a variety of different yoga practices such as yoga therapy, meditation and other wellness services for Afghan women.

According to Momtaz yoga has always been part of her life, and no one taught her, she started doing yoga when she was only three years old. In 1966, her family fled to Pakistan and then in 2002 they returned to Afghanistan after the Taliban had no control and women were allowed to work again. Momtaz's passion for social change led her to open up the Yoga centre in Kabul she said: "Everyone in this country wants to find peace after suffering in years of war and conflict." Alongside this, she has joined in 70 hours of yoga training in International Yoga Festival in India 2018 and has carried out 300 hours of Yoga Teacher Training in SVYASA, a Yoga university in Bangalore, India. She has also tried to develop a 'Yoga app,' in 2019 which was selected for the semi-finals of the Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) competition in the United States. Although she could not reach the final stages of the competition she still aims to develop the Yoga app. The aim of the app was to make yoga accessible to Afghan women who are not able to leave their homes to attend the classes.

The ongoing war in Afghanistan has an impact on the population's mental health but more on the women. According to the International Psychosocial Organisation (IPSO) report, it is estimated that 70% of Afghanistan's 37 million people are in need of psychological support. Alongside this, women are also at a higher risk of experiencing mental health issues from conflict. (2020)



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