

NPR: Afghan women still being imprisoned for failing virginity tests

RFERL (28.08.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2lvJtbH> – Afghan women are still being imprisoned for failing virginity tests, despite a nationwide ban on the unscientific practice, U.S. National Public Radio (NPR) reported on August 27.

Farhad Javid, an Islamic policy adviser for Marie Stopes International, a U.S. global family planning organization, told NPR that she and Afghanistan's first lady, Rula Ghani, visited a prison in January where many of the women were being held.

As a result, 190 prisoners were released between January and April, yet more have since been jailed, Javid said.

"Many are kept inside the jail for a year and a half – for nothing," Javid told NPR in a separate interview.

In 2018, the UN banned the tests, which don't accurately prove if a woman has had sex.

They are "medically unnecessary, and often times painful, humiliating, and the traumatic practice must end," according to the UN.

Afghan families force daughters to take the tests for a variety of reasons.

They are administered as rape tests, or used to determine whether someone can attend school, get married, or hired for a job.

If a daughter fails the test, the police are usually alerted, and the incarceration process begins.

To reduce the practice, Javid this month rolled out training programs that target police and members of the legal community, including judges and the Prosecutor-General's Office.

In May, similar sessions were held in the health-care community to educate medical workers.