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How Herat defied the Taliban regime, chanting 'women, work and freedom'

CHENNAI – 25 Nov, 2026 The chants were familiar. But this time, they echoed not in Tehran, but in Herat.

In mid-June, Afghanistan's western city of Herat witnessed a rare display of public defiance against the Taliban. Women, and this time, men too, marched through the streets chanting "Women, Work and Freedom", a slogan probably inspired by Iran's 2022 "Woman, Life and Freedom" movement that emerged after the death of the 22-year-old Mahsa Amini.

According to Zan Times, an exiled media organisation run by Afghan women journalists, the latest crackdown appears to have been planned days in advance. On June 4, Herat's governor Noor Ahmad Islamjar reportedly met with a group of morality enforcers.

On the afternoon of June 5, Taliban officials used the end of Friday prayers to announce that women who failed to comply with



the Islamic dress code would be arrested. The following morning, the arrests began.