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Afghanistan's child brides

The unhappiest day of her life

Our narrated slideshow documents the consequences of the Afghan tradition of selling young girls as brides

THE forced marriage of young girls is a long-standing tradition in Afghanistan, often used as a means of settling disputes and debts, or raising money. Around 60% of girls are married off before they reach the legal minimum age of 16. The custom immediately removes young girls from education, contributing to an illiteracy rate of 80% among Afghan women. Pregnancies among 10-to-14-year-old girls contribute to the country's high incidence of maternal mortality.

Our online slideshow of photographs

by Stephanie Sinclair, who documents women's lives around the world, captures the apprehensive glance of 11-year-old Ghulam Haider (above) as she sees her husband for the first time. She also shows the courageous work of Afghanistan's most senior policewoman, Malalai Kakar (who was murdered by the Taliban last September), and the desperation of those who try to escape forced marriages. ■

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