

(إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ) (سورة حجرات-آية ١٠)  
*'The believers are but a single brotherhood, so make peace and reconciliation between your brothers;  
and fear Allah, that ye may receive mercy'*

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**Statement**  
**Afghan Women's Roadmap for Peace**  
**National Conference**  
**Kabul, Afghanistan, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

We, the more than 150 participants of the *Afghan Women's Roadmap for Peace Entering the Transformation Decade* conference (supported by The Berghof Foundation), as representatives of grassroots civil society, provincial peace committees, civil society actors, and the Government, gathered together in Kabul, Afghanistan, from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015, to jointly discuss the status of women in the peace process.

Since its formation, the National Unity Government has taken significant steps towards reconciliation which are welcomed and encouraged by all of us. However, we are still concerned about the transparency and inclusiveness of this process. Afghanistan is a war-torn country, with a history of repeated reconciliation attempts by different Governments. Unfortunately, none have been successful, mainly due to the exclusivity of the process being managed by small and powerful (mainly male) elites. Such high-level but restricted peace talks might bring some advancement towards peace at the political level, but peace at the social level will not be achieved until all groups of society are both included in, and have ownership of, the process.

We collectively appreciate the National Unity Government's initial efforts in acknowledging peace as the top priority of the country, and taking immediate and concrete action towards restarting the peace process. We believe there are many internal and external drivers of conflict in Afghanistan that cannot be addressed only by the Government, as they also require the support of grassroots people and civil society, neighboring and Islamic countries, and the international community.

We therefore issue the following recommendations to each of the aforementioned groups:-

**Government and High Peace Council**

1. *Establish a mechanism for consulting with all groups of Afghan people, particularly women, on the peace process, and inform them on a regular basis on any progress made.*
2. *Develop and implement a clear policy and strategy on all aspects of peace, reintegration, reconciliation and the role of women, at both the grassroots and national levels.*
3. *Establish a platform or mechanism for addressing, or at least acknowledging, past grievances, and initiate a national healing campaign.*
4. *Ensure women's meaningful presence in all peace negotiations and decision-making processes regarding peace, reintegration, reconciliation, and security.*

5. *Uphold women's needs and rights, as outlined in the Constitution, as peace preconditions; any negotiations with the Taliban must include the guaranteed safeguarding of women's rights, human rights, the Constitution as it now stands, and the women right to education.*
6. *Safeguard and promote the Constitution, ensuring that the Constitution is maintained during all peace negotiations.*
7. *Improve security, particularly in rural areas, including training and awareness for police officers, and the recruitment of more female police officers.*
8. *Improve access to justice and encouraging tribal and religious leaders to create spaces for dispute prevention, providing people with the tools to channel conflict away from crisis without infringing on the rights and freedoms of women and girls.*

#### **Armed Opposition Groups**

1. *Conflict, war and violence are not the solution, as Afghan civilians, including women and children, are sacrificed unnecessarily. The National Unity Government has provided opportunities for discussion, so we urge you to engage with the government for negotiation for the good of current and future generations.*
2. *If you continue the violence even after the government's call for negotiation, you will remain accountable for all of your acts; you need to be mindful of the repercussions of the high human cost violence and civilian attacks.*

#### **Civil Society**

1. *Establish a civil society monitoring mechanism for peace and security issues from all perspectives, to allow the joint monitoring of peace and security processes through a collective of individual efforts.*
2. *Promote rights-based discourse, mainstreaming the training and capacity-building of women to represent their needs and perspectives through both an Islamic rights-based and global lens.*
3. *Create networking opportunities, forums, and trainings at the local, regional, national and international levels, for Afghan women to build connections with women's rights defenders around the world.*
4. *Increase knowledge of the provisions of the Constitution, ensuring that women and men understand their rights as outlined, and that information regarding those rights is accessible regardless of geography or literacy.*
5. *Increase and improve media reporting, including promoting female journalists and/or streamlining more gender equitable sources of opinion and information into media coverage.*

#### **Islamic and Neighboring Countries**

1. *Support the people of Afghanistan in the peace process by effective and meaningful regional cooperation for peace and security to end proxy wars.*

2. *Organize and host peace and security dialogues for policymakers, civil society actors, and women's rights defenders to encourage more collaboration between different stakeholders.*
3. *Assist the Government of Afghanistan in upholding women's rights in peace talks and negotiations.*
4. *Initiate a joint campaign in discouraging suicide attacks in the name of Islam, especially in public places, and facilitate a ceasefire between the Government of Afghanistan and armed oppositions.*
5. *We urge all countries in the region to stop using Afghanistan as an area for conflict and competition of intelligence. Afghanistan should instead be used as a center of regional cooperation, for the economic and political benefit of not only Afghanistan but all countries in the region.*

### **International Community and Donors**

1. *Invest in Afghan initiatives, providing financial and technical resources to Afghan-run and led initiatives that support community mobilization around peace processes, particularly incorporating women's perspectives into peace and security planning.*
2. *Advocate for a gender-inclusive, and grassroots-based, peace and reconciliation process, incorporating women's perspectives, experiences and needs.*
3. *Exert pressure to keep women's rights on the agenda. The international community can make their support contingent upon the inclusion of women in the peace process, and the safeguarding of women's rights and freedom in any negotiations.*
4. *Lessons must be learned from past experiences, and Afghans, especially the National Unity Government's peace initiative, should be supported. Political pressure should be put on Taliban, and the state supporting them, to come forward for fair and transparent negotiation and reconciliation.*