

**Vienna Process
for a Democratic Afghanistan
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30 April, 2023

**His Excellency Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the
United Nations
New York City
U.S.A.**

*Our Urgent Appeal: **DON'T JUST LISTEN TO US, RESPOND TO US!***

Re.: Your meeting with the Special Representatives in Doha

Dear Secretary General,

We, the undersigned Afghan women from different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds are united in our grave concerns that a closed-door gathering, featuring special envoys on Afghanistan from various countries, is being hosted by the United Nations in Doha, Qatar, without the representation and inclusion of Afghan women.

This meeting reportedly aims to “clarify expectations” regarding concerns held by the United Nations and UN member states about the Taliban’s barbaric and violent oppression of women and girls. The lack of participation - and more so – the acknowledgment of Afghan women in these forums is of utmost apprehension, especially following the recent offensive comments by the UN Deputy Secretary General Amina J. Mohammad, who expressed the possibility of taking “baby steps to put us back on the pathway to recognition of the Taliban, a principled recognition.” This, Your Excellency, expresses a shocking disregard for our ongoing and existential fight for survival.

The women of Afghanistan are incredulous that the United Nations, UN member states, or any international organisation would deliberately engage with a well-known terrorist establishment - let alone with the Taliban, who continue to outrageously violate basic human rights of the Afghan people, through targeted violence against women, girls and ethnic minorities. There is indisputable evidence of the Taliban’s gender apartheid and the systematic elimination of women and girls from all features of society in Afghanistan. The Taliban are not reformers. We protest and criticise any effort to “normalise” diplomatic affairs with Taliban.

Hence, we wholeheartedly appeal to the United Nations and its member states that instead of “taking baby steps” towards recognising the terror regime of the Taliban, the United Nation must, as a matter of immediacy, urgently embrace its long-stated mandate and work with the International Criminal Court (ICC) to hold the leaders of the Taliban accountable for their

despicable human rights violations and war crimes. This includes the forcible displacement and confiscation of land from indigenous communities in northern and central Afghanistan, as well as the arbitrary and unlawful detention and persecution of peaceful protesters, advocates of universal education, journalists, university professors, and former members of the democratically-elected government and national security forces. These egregious offenses, which contradict basic humanity, flagrantly violate international human rights agreements and humanitarian law and are clear contraventions of the ICC Rome Statute.

Since August 2021, Afghanistan has become a safe haven for terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda, Daesh, and other regional terrorist fractions. The killing of Al-Qaeda leader Imam Al Zawahiri in Kabul by US forces in July 2022, as well as the attacks on members of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan in Khost and other provinces, provide clear evidence of the escalating terrorism in the region.

We, the women of Afghanistan who participated in the 2nd Vienna Conference, call upon all attendees of the Doha meeting on Afghanistan on May 1-2 to:

- Ensure that Afghan women are invited and granted the opportunity to express themselves in any such summit about Afghanistan, especially on subjects relating to women and girls. This should include Afghan women's rights activists, protestors, and leaders in exile, as well as female members of civil society, both inside and outside of Afghanistan. Global leaders - who do not distance themselves from Amina J. Mohammad's irresponsible attitude and continue to only pay lip-service to the protection of girls 'and women's rights of Afghanistan - do not represent us!
- Confirm that Taliban leaders are accountable under the principle of Universal Jurisdiction for the heinous crimes they have and continue to commit against the people of Afghanistan, in particular against women and girls.
- Confirm that disciplinary international restrictions are enforced on the leaders and administrators of the Taliban. Corresponding sanctions, comprising the extension of the travel prohibition, a world-wide restriction on assets owned by the Taliban and Taliban leadership, and systematically re-listing senior Taliban officials on the UN sanctions list are essential steps to guaranteeing the defence of human rights for the people of Afghanistan.
- Confirm that the people of Afghanistan are fully empowered in paving the way for an inclusive government that reflects the will of all Afghans and includes representatives from all sectors of society, with particular attention given to the participation of women and ethnic minorities.

A failure to courageously stand up against the Taliban and make them responsible for their crimes will enable their cruel, persistent, and ferocious rule of terror to carry on.

And you will be held accountable for your inaction before the court of humanity!

DON'T JUST LISTEN TO US, RESPOND TO US!

Sincerely,

We, the women of Afghanistan who participated in the 2nd Vienna Conference.

To:

The United Nations Secretary General

The United Nations Assistant Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA)

The United Nations Human Rights Council

The United Nations Security Council

The Secretary of State, Washington DC, United States

The High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Brussels, Belgium

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Austria

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Australia

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium

The Minister of foreign Affairs Great Britain

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of France

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Iran

The Minister of Foreign Affairs India

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Netherlands

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Pakistan