

In the name of God

The message from Afghan civil society to the International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn, Germany

Acknowledging that the International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn is a critical opportunity for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the international community to reaffirm their mutual commitment to work together to enable sustainable development, enhance the rule of law and good governance, promote peace and justice, and to further their efforts to help the people of Afghanistan who have long suffered from the conflict in the country,

Building on the experience gained in the last decade, and learning from the lost opportunities, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the international community, based on a common vision, should focus their efforts on bringing security and stability to Afghanistan and to the region in order to prevent citizens of Afghanistan and other countries from being victims of regional terrorism and unrest,

Emphasizing human rights values and with a view to protecting the achievements of the last decade, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan should strive to further its capabilities in managing crises, fighting corruption, and improving the delivery of social services and development. This also requires the Afghan Government and the international community to cooperate on further strengthening democratic processes and institutions, protecting fundamental rights and freedom of the press, promoting human rights principles and ending the prevailing culture of impunity. Both parties must increase their joint efforts to promote people's trust in a participatory system of governance and the Afghan Government's ability to deliver justice to the victims of war and to improve living conditions for the citizens of Afghanistan.

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned issues, Afghan civil society institutions propose the following points to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the international community. We believe these issues will help enable both parties to support a common and unified vision for the future of the Afghan people and the country as a whole, especially in relation to the transition process, the long-term commitment of the international community, and the peace and reconciliation process:

1. TRANSITION PROCESS

What is expected of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- The second phase of transition (Inteqal) should be based on a thorough evaluation of the first phase and the lessons learned, giving full consideration to the necessary capacities, resources (human and financial), and the demands and satisfaction of the people,
- Equal attention must be paid to the civilian dimension of the transition process (quality of the delivery of social services without any gender or ethnic discrimination, good governance, effective measures to curb corruption, promotion and protection of human rights, as well as the reform and independence of the judiciary) in parallel to the military aspect of transition (qualitative and quantitative support for Afghan security institutions),
- It should give priority to implementing the rule of law, supporting and strengthening the democratic process and institutions (i.e. reform and independence of the electoral process, in particular), and to merit-based appointments,
- It should strengthen healthy working relations between the judiciary, legislative, and executive, and specifically to establish a professional, effective, and responsive cabinet.

What is expected of the international community:

- It should support systems and institutions (particularly civil society and democratic institutions) and focus on infrastructure rather than supporting individuals and their dependent groups,
- It should focus on supporting and building the national security forces (ANA & ANP), and not quasi and parallel security setups (Arbaki, local police and security companies),
- It should continue political, technical, and financial support for state building and nation building efforts in Afghanistan, and exert the required political pressure on regional spoilers meddling in and challenging security in Afghanistan,
- It should provide structural and continued support and leverage the complementary monitoring and consulting roles of civil society and human rights defenders, as well as women's rights activists in the efforts to promote responsive, inclusive, and good governance.

What is expected of both the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan & the international community:

- They should effectively explore and leverage existing capacities and capabilities available within Afghan civil society institutions as a de facto potential for delivering social services and implementing the National Priority Programmes (NPP).

2. LONG-TERM COMMITMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:

It is, specifically, expected that the International Community will:

- Extend its cooperation to the implementation of sustainable development (poverty alleviation schemes, support to local industries, agriculture, irrigation, commerce, communication networking, and other infrastructure facilities) in order to lead Afghanistan to self-sufficiency and prosperity,
- Strengthen the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's capacity and capability in furthering its efforts to fight terrorism, drug trafficking and poppy cultivation, based on the decade-long experience in fighting terrorism (at the regional and international levels),
- Assist – through technical, financial, and security support – the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in conducting a national census in order to have the reliable figures and statistics needed for sustainable development and lasting economic growth,
- Develop unified and practical mechanisms and procedures to fight corruption, and enable the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to implement it, while providing support to the role of Afghan civil society institutions in monitoring good governance and responsive government,
- Regularly evaluate aid effectiveness in terms of service delivery and monitoring roles of civil society organizations, as well as elected institutions/entities,
- Support and protect, both politically and technically, the democratic and civil society institutions, as the connecting and bridging entities between regional powers, and in particular between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

3. POLITICAL SOLUTIONS AND REINTEGRATION:

The civil society institutions of Afghanistan have always supported efforts to promote a peaceful settlement with full consideration given to upholding human rights, women's rights, social justice, victims' demands, and ensuring those efforts are within the accepted religious, national and international values. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is expected:

- Based on past experience and the ineffectiveness of previous methods, which were one-sided and offered privileges, to consider the Peace and Reintegration Strategy as a necessary and inseparable component to complement and support good governance, and to curb corruption, carry out reforms to make the judiciary independent, end the culture of impunity and promote justice,
- To uphold human rights values and civil norms in all negotiations and efforts for peace and reconciliation initiatives in order to make a clear distinction between friend and foe and to implement its policies with a clear vision.

- To implement, based on the international obligations and commitments it entered into at the Kabul Conference, the action plan of transitional justice, while taking practical measures to improve the rule of law, justice and due processes,
- Not to subordinate human rights values, women's rights, fundamental and civil rights in any political efforts for peace and reintegration process,
- To consider mechanisms for reintegration that support justice and accountability for armed groups which wish to join the peace process, while ensuring that they no longer pose a threat to the people and the country.

The international community is expected:

- Not to favour strategies that lead to short-term political solutions and speedy reintegration process as a premature exit strategy,
- Not to overshadow the regional and international dimension of the conflict in Afghanistan, and, to assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in addressing the root causes of the external factors (through military, political and economic pressures),
- To formalize its presence, and based on the Geneva Conventions, to strictly avoid civilian casualties in order to limit political exploitation by fundamentalists and regional spoilers,
- To simultaneously support the advocacy efforts of civil society institutions and human rights defenders to protect war victims and to promote mechanisms for addressing war crimes while building the relevant capacities of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,
- To uphold and apply universal human rights values in Afghanistan in all humanitarian and development assistance (civil and military), while supporting the complementary roles of civil society institutions in consultation, service delivery, humanitarian assistance, public awareness raising and advocacy initiatives.

The civil society institutions of Afghanistan sincerely believe that this great gathering in Bonn can lead to further cooperation and the creation of a unified vision shared by the Government of Afghanistan, the international community, and Afghan civil society institutions in order to bring peace and a prosperous future to the country and the Afghan people.

Afghan civil society institutions
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