



## **Recommendations on Afghanistan's Reconciliation, Reintegration, and Transition Processes**

From June 9 to 16, 2011, the Afghan Women's Network and The Institute for Inclusive Security convened a regionally diverse delegation of 11 Afghan women leaders in Washington, DC. Delegates include civil society leaders from Kabul and conflict-affected provinces, a parliamentarian, the gender advisor to the High Peace Council Secretariat, and a journalist.

Drawing on their experiences, delegates propose to the US government strategies for stabilizing Afghanistan. Recommendations focus on reintegrating insurgents; pursuing local and national reconciliation; managing the transition of US forces out of Afghanistan; and contending with regional dynamics. They provide guidance on creating the inclusive, participatory approaches essential to sustainability of these efforts and long-term stability.

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### **BONN CONFERENCE**

*The US government should apply diplomatic pressure to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Federal Republic of Germany to:*

1. Ensure that women play an active role in preparations for the Conference, including shaping the agenda.
2. Ensure that 30 percent of the official Afghan delegation to the Bonn Conference is comprised by civil society, of which 50 percent should be women.
3. Provide financial support for a national women's consultation followed by a civil society forum to be held in Kabul prior to the Bonn Conference. The civil society forum should discuss the topics on the Conference agenda and elect representatives for participation in the delegation, including women.
4. Prioritize the inclusion in the Conference of political actors from the full range of insurgent and opposition groups; no political actor related to the ongoing conflict should be actively excluded.
5. Insist a woman representative from civil society address the Conference plenary with oral remarks.

### **RECONCILIATION**

*The US government should:*

6. Urge the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to implement a more participatory and inclusive reconciliation process. Support GIROA with funds to undertake a national consultation and facilitate connections to international conflict resolution experts who can assist in designing the process.
  - a. Phase One: Civil society organizations will conduct a national survey to document awareness of and positions on the ongoing Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program.



- b. Phase Two: The civil society organizations involved in conducting the survey will report findings to the High Peace Council and GIROA. Based on findings, civil society, Council members, and GIROA will develop a strategy for a national consultation.
- c. Phase Three: Civil society, with oversight from the High Peace Council, will conduct consultations that engage rural communities beginning at the district level and progressing to the provincial and regional levels, culminating in a national-level consultation.
  - i. Consultations should include separate tracks for men and women but outcomes of discussions should be consolidated into a single summary document by trained facilitators to avoid marginalization of women's recommendations.
  - ii. Guiding questions for consultations should explore substantive issues that will be negotiated by GIROA and the Taliban if and when formal talks ensue, including protections for women's rights.
7. Provide financial support to women's civil society groups for an expansion to the provinces of the High Peace Council's Women's Peace Campaign. The Campaign will include a national convening of 2,000 women in Kabul to discuss women's roles and inclusion in the peace process. Women's civil society groups will replicate this conference in the provinces.
8. Include advancement of women's participation in the peace process among the accountability criteria for the \$50 million the US has committed to support the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program.
9. Prioritize funds to support technical capacity building for women at the district, provincial, and national levels in conflict resolution and negotiations.
10. Address the issue of Pakistan's support for the Afghan insurgency and ongoing interference in Afghanistan's affairs by:
  - a. imposing stronger accountability and reporting requirements for US financial assistance to Pakistan;
  - b. redirecting future US foreign assistance to Pakistan away from the military and towards civil society;
  - c. negotiating access to water resources shared by Afghanistan and Pakistan; and
  - d. supporting people-to-people exchanges between Afghans and Pakistanis focused on cultivating and strengthening mutually beneficial economic ties at the local and national levels.

## **REINTEGRATION**

*The US government should:*

11. Use its position on the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) Financial Oversight Committee to advocate for inclusion of a woman representative from civil society on both the Oversight Committee and the Technical Committee.



12. As part of the ongoing restructuring of the Ministry of Women's Affairs funded by USAID, urge the Ministry to establish a reintegration cell and engage with implementation of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program through the Joint Secretariat Committees.
13. Urgently request that civil society are consulted on standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to vetting and amnesty provisions.

*The US government should urge the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to:*

14. Increase protection measures for female Provincial Peace Council and Provincial Joint Secretariat Teams members. Measures could include provision of: safe transportation, body guards, and financial reimbursement for *mahram* [related male escort] travel costs.
15. Insist that Provincial Joint Secretariat Teams have:
  - a. explicit strategic plans, approved by the Provincial Peace Council, for outreach efforts that specifically target women and youth, including the wives and family members of fighters. Plans could include door-to-door awareness raising, media (prioritizing local radio), and outreach events in schools and health clinics;
  - b. specific indicators to track outreach to women and youth; and
  - c. requirements for a gender advisor to be included as a technical expert.
16. Require that the database used to track information on potential reintegrees includes the criminal history of those individuals who undergo the vetting process.
17. Incentivize fighters reintegrating with their immediate families by offering family-targeted, rather than fighter-targeted, transitional assistance. Transitional assistance packages targeting families could include kitchen tools, children's food, school vouchers, and sanitary products.
18. Develop a reintegration strategy in which grievance resolution coupled with local reconciliation is a critical component, taking into account the needs of victims and their families. Ensure the strategy is adapted to each region's social and political dynamics. The strategies should include:
  - a. opportunities for victims and their family members to register claims of grievances;
  - b. facilitated exchanges between women from families of reintegrees and women of the communities to which reintegrees are returning;
  - c. forgiveness-focused transitional justice processes aimed at breaking the cycles of retribution; and
  - d. utilization of both modern and traditional civil society organizations for assistance with local reconciliation efforts and community-level workshops on peace.
19. Require the collection of sex-disaggregated data by existing APRP monitoring and evaluation units at the national and provincial levels.



20. Create an external civil society-led monitoring body with provincial reach to evaluate the activities of the APRP that:
  - a. is composed of at least 50 percent women;
  - b. has an explicit mandate to monitor and evaluate women's inclusion in the activities of the APRP, building on existing monitoring efforts;
  - c. includes committees at the district and provincial levels; and
  - d. interacts with the Provincial Peace Councils and Provincial Joint Secretariat Teams on a consistent basis.

## **TRANSITION**

*The US government should:*

21. Conduct evaluations of women's security in transitioned districts in consultation with civil society and women's groups every six months, beginning now and extending beyond 2014 as the security situation dictates. The evaluations should include data on:
  - a. attacks on women in public life;
  - b. violence against women;
  - c. women's mobility;
  - d. responsiveness of appropriate government authorities in investigating and prosecuting violence against women;
  - e. number and rank of women in Afghan National Security Forces (number recruited, number trained, assignment, and rank); and
  - f. indicators measuring quality and capability, rather than size, of the ANSF.
22. In consultation with Afghan women's organizations, improve vetting criteria for recruitment to the ANSF. Criteria should exclude from security forces individuals against whom there are credible allegations of violence against women.
23. Support the creation of an external oversight body that includes civil society organizations to monitor the implementation of vetting and advancement criteria, including women's representation and advancement as well as investigate and respond to new allegations of abuses by members of security forces against women and children.
24. Conduct a thorough assessment, in consultation with Afghan civil society, of the Afghan Local Police, including assessments of vetting, the ability of communities to distinguish ALP from militia, and security concerns of women about these new forces.
25. Withdraw US and coalition forces from Afghanistan gradually, determining pace and magnitude based on indicators of political and economic stability.
26. Formulate, in collaboration with the Afghan government, women, civil society organizations, and GIRoA, a long-term economic strategy for Afghanistan to help ensure economic stability and independence. Include reforms to ensure robust anti-corruption measures in key industries, including mineral extraction, energy, and agriculture.