



WOMEN'S REGIONAL NETWORK  
AFGHANISTAN • PAKISTAN • INDIA



February 8, 2021

Kamala Harris  
Vice President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW,  
Washington, DC 20500

Madam Vice President,

On behalf of the Women's Regional Network: Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, (WRN) and the Women's Advocacy Committee (WAC) of Afghanistan, we congratulate you on your historic victory as the first female Vice President of the United States. With gratitude, we express our appreciation for and call upon your continued support for the women of Afghanistan in the ongoing US-led peace negotiations.

With the endorsement and assistance of the international community and the United States, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was developed and put in place in 2004. This Constitution, for the first time, guaranteed equality for Afghan women who have endured continual human rights violations through 42 years of brutal bloodshed. **The rights enshrined in the new Constitution resulted in significant gains for women** in the areas of education, health, and the judiciary resulting in a vibrant Afghan civil society. Today, both the Afghanistan Parliament and the Senate comprise 25 percent female representation, exceptional for this region. It is imperative the hard-won gains of the past 20 years are not lost. **The roles and rights of women must not be infringed upon in the rush to negotiate a peace agreement.**

The women of Afghanistan are concerned about the peace process, given the historic record of the Taliban's mistreatment of women and their lack of clarity and acceptance of the civil rights guaranteed under Chapter Two of the Afghan Constitution. **Women in general and women's rights activists, in particular, continue to experience terror, relentless brutality, and assassinations on a daily basis.** With our lives immersed in constant fear, we require and call upon the support and commitment of the international community to ensure the sacrifices of tens of thousands of civilian lives does not revert back to Taliban practices of oppression and persecution.

Your election victory not only brought hope to women in the United States but also to women around the world, particularly women in Afghanistan. The outcome of the peace negotiations with the Taliban will shape the lives of the people of Afghanistan for decades to follow and could have dire consequences for women and girls, should their rights be violated. **We ask for your support in preserving the constitutional protections for women's rights.** Civil and women's rights accomplishments must not be compromised. They must be a precondition of any peace agreement.

*(Continued)*



**We request your consideration of the following key points for the success of the Afghanistan Peace Process.** Women's participation is essential to the success and stability of the overall peace process as stated in the *Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017* enacted by the US Congress with strong bi-partisan support. That Act is the first comprehensive legislation in the world recognizing women as critical to peacemaking and security maintenance.

1. **Without a ceasefire the Peace Talks are meaningless.** In 2020 there were no casualties of the US and NATO soldiers in Afghanistan. However, during the same period, more than 150 Afghan men, women, and children were killed daily. No country is as war-weary and ravaged from losing our dear ones as Afghanistan. We demand an immediate ceasefire.
2. **The Afghanistan Constitution's Second Chapter is a milestone in securing the achievements of the Afghan women** and for the attainment of social justice, gender equality, and inclusion of women in the social, economic, and political affairs of our country. It must not be bargained away during the peace negotiations.
3. Since the start of the Peace Talks, targeted killings of Afghan civil society leaders, women activists, journalists, and intellectuals have increased, preventing their engagement in activities to promote human rights in the country, the obvious intent of the Taliban. **Continued killings of Afghans must be stopped and MUST be a pre-condition for the continuation of the Peace Talks.**
4. Afghan women's meaningful participation is key to the sustainability of peace. We urge the United States, and our international partners to vigilantly **monitor the peace negotiations and the post-peace process, to ensure women's achievements are meaningfully implemented and sustained.** The desires, hopes, and hard-won rights of the women of Afghanistan, as determined by them, need to be respected and safeguarded. They have the greatest stake in ensuring that peace endures.
5. Corruption (all kinds) is fueling insecurity, large-scale smuggling, drug and human trafficking, illegal migration, inter alia. The government must be pressured to **take serious actions to curb and eliminate the practice of corruption,** a major obstacle adversely impacting women's empowerment and engagement, in both civil and political undertakings.

With dedication and highest regards,  
*The Afghanistan Women's Advocacy Committee and Women's Regional Network*

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**The Women's Regional Network (WRN)** is a network of women civil society leaders working collectively and collaboratively to advance women's rights and regional peace in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Its core purpose is to amplify the voices of unheard, marginalized women, and with them address the interlinked issues of peace, militarization, forced displacements, (in)security, justice, and governance in South Asia.

**The Women's Advocacy Committee (WAC)** is a network of Afghanistan Civil Society Organizations, Human Rights Activists, and academic experts who advocate and lobby for women's rights and gender equality in Afghanistan.