



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

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Quarterly debate on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

Written statement submitted by the Permanent Mission of Australia to the
United Nations in New York

Australia welcomes progress towards intra-Afghan negotiations, and we stand ready to support where we can.

We appreciate progress made to appoint cabinet members and delegates to the High Peace Council, and encourage all stakeholders to work together to finalise these appointments through Parliament.

Afghanistan needs a strong, stable, and unified Government to tackle the challenges of peace, development, and COVID-19.

Australia urges all parties to build on the momentum of the recent Eid al Adha and Eid al Fitr ceasefires to reduce violence and begin to negotiate a comprehensive, durable, and resilient intra-Afghan peace agreement.

A significant barrier to peace is the ongoing high level of violence. We strongly condemn all attacks on civilians, and we call for an end to targeting human rights workers and peace negotiators. We condemn, in the strongest terms, the attempted assassination of Fawzia Koofi, a member of the Afghan government's negotiating team.

Australia encourages all parties to the intra-Afghan negotiations to be inclusive and consultative towards a peaceful future. The rights of women and girls, and the inclusion of youth, are fundamentally important to the success and sustainability of Afghanistan's peace process. We call on all parties to ensure the voices of women and girls are included in each part of the peace process recognising that women's participation is essential for Afghanistan's future as a modern economy, integrated with the region and the wider world.

Afghanistan needs its women and youth to play an equal part in development, building on gains but also reaching new heights. A healthy, safe and educated society needs women health workers, teachers and participants in economic life.

Australia expects continued progress on the hard fought gains that have been made over the past 19 years, including further progress on the rights of women and girls.

Australia continues to be concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the people of Afghanistan. The scale of the crisis requires a robust response from all parties to avoid a new wave of poverty and despair.

Australia echoes calls by the Afghan President, the UN Secretary General, and SRSG Lyons for a humanitarian ceasefire, as the best chance for Afghanistan to combat this deadly epidemic. There are 14 million Afghans in urgent need of humanitarian assistance – almost 4 million close the famine-level – therefore we encourage the international community to respond to their needs. We have responded by pivoting our development program to assist, including support to humanitarian and healthcare interventions.

We would like to stress the importance of seizing the moment. Now is the time for peace and there is real hope for a lasting resolution that will consolidate, protect and build upon the gains of the last 19 years in Afghanistan, especially for women and girls.

We will continue to work closely with the Afghan Government, UNAMA, NATO and our fellow supporting nations to help end the long-lasting despair and conflict within Afghanistan.