



AUSTRALIA



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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

21 June 2016

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

**Statement by H.E. Ms Gillian Bird
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Australia to the United Nations**

(As delivered)

Thank you Mr President,

I'd like to join others in thanking the Secretary General for his report on Afghanistan, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his statement and Special Representative Nicholas Haysom for his briefing. Australia is deeply grateful to Special Representative Haysom for his astute leadership, dedication and outstanding 4 years of service to UNAMA and Afghanistan. We wish him every success in his new role as Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan.

We also take this opportunity to welcome and congratulate Tadamichi Yamamoto on his appointment. Mr Yamamoto has served with distinction as Deputy Special Representative and we look forward to working with him.

Over the past three months the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated, with armed clashes increasing in 2016. Terrorist attacks orchestrated by the Taliban have continued to inflict enormous harm, including attacks against the media, government and judicial officials - killing and injuring hundreds of innocent civilians. We condemn in the strongest terms the brutal and reckless tactics of the Taliban in targeting civilians. We also express our condolences for the terrorist attacks yesterday in Kabul and Badakhshan.

The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces have proven resolute in response to sustained pressure, and we honour their sacrifices. We also extend our gratitude to UN personnel and the international coalition for their tireless work to support the Afghan people. Australia reaffirms its commitment to Afghanistan to assist in defending its people against the insurgency.

In the coming months, the international community will meet in Warsaw and then Brussels to recommit to Afghanistan and chart the way forward to the year 2020 and beyond. In Warsaw,

Australia will join international partners in committing to support Afghanistan's National Defense and Security Forces, and in Brussels we will do the same to support Afghanistan's reconstruction and development.

We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to use this opportunity, created by the international community's collective support, to redouble efforts to implement its reform agenda. There remains much to do, particularly in continuing to counter corruption.

We welcome the Government of Afghanistan's support for gender equality, including steps towards addressing violence against women and implementing the National Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325. Full implementation of the Action Plan and the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women must be priorities.

The protection of children is also paramount. We welcome recent progress made in preventing child recruitment by the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police. We urge the Government to increase the oversight of child recruitment by the Afghan Local Police and take further steps to implement the recommendations of Security Council Resolution 1612.

We further urge the Government of Afghanistan to work pragmatically towards Parliamentary and District Council elections being held as soon as practicable.

Finally, let me express Australia's appreciation for the role UNAMA plays in guiding and coordinating international efforts in Afghanistan. We look forward to continued cooperation with UNAMA and the Afghan Government.

Thank you Mr President.