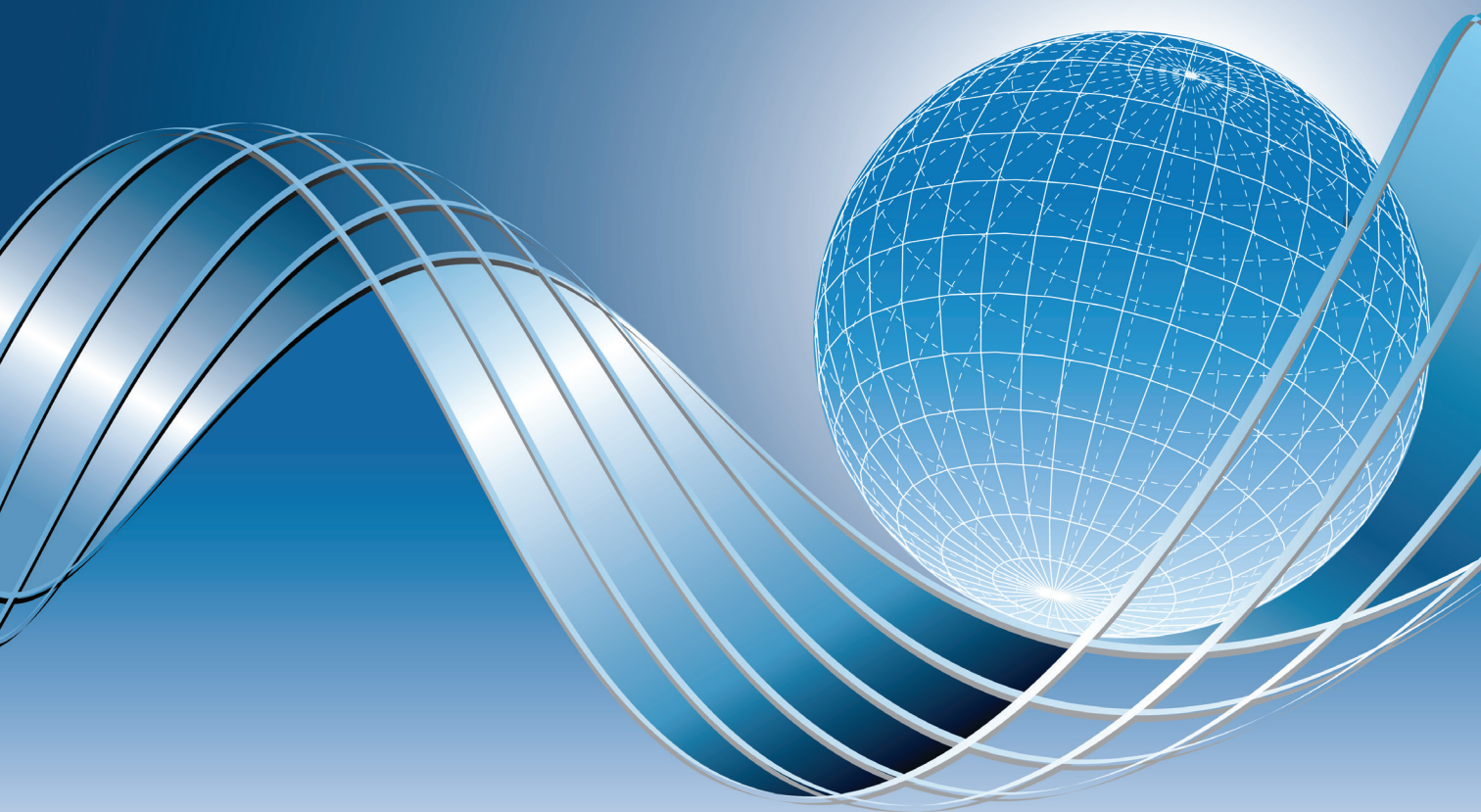


# WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Afghanistan-Pakistan Women's Policy Brief

JANUARY 2017



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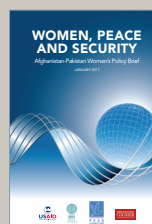
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## READ IT ON





***Though the [peace] processes in each country differ in framework, the objectives are the same as are some of the actors. However, a crucial element missing is the lack of women's voices in the design and implementation of the policies.***

***By ensuring that women are the authors of the Policy Brief, it automatically gives women in both countries a credible and effective platform to express their views on exactly how the Afghan and Pakistan processes should be implemented to yield greater success.***

## INTRODUCTION

The Pakistan-Afghan Women's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PAWFPD) was established in 2012 to enhance cross-border cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan. This initiative engages and empowers women from both countries to participate in processes that help to build peace in the region. In October 2015, the United Nations Security Council convened a High-level Review to assess 15 years of progress at the global, regional and national levels on resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Through the Afghanistan-Pakistan Women Policy Brief, PAWFPD will build on the review of this document and utilize it as an opportunity to gather women's perspectives on solutions to security issues in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The policy brief will seek to assist decision-makers navigate similar security issues facing Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as provide guidance to the respective governments.

Since 2001, militancy and terrorism have grown in Afghanistan and Pakistan destabilizing all socio-political and economic efforts at bringing stability and prosperity to both countries and the region. To prevent the rise in escalation of violence and ultimately bring an end to the conflict, the Afghan government launched a peace process engaging the Taliban in 2010. In Pakistan, talks with Taliban militants in 2014 failed because of intransigent attitudes and unacceptable demands by the latter. The military then launched Operation Zarb-e-Azb in June 2014, mostly targeting militant hideouts in North Waziristan. As a reaction, the militants attacked the Army Public School in Peshawar, claiming the lives of 144 school-children. This gruesome attack galvanized the civilian-military leadership and, as a result, the counter-terror National Action Plan with preemptive, prevention and punitive elements were adopted.

Both Afghanistan and Pakistan are trying to bring forth a political solution in tandem with military efforts in tackling terrorism and bringing peace to the border region. Though the processes in each country differ in framework, the objectives are the same as are some of the actors. However, a crucial element missing is the lack of women's voices in the design and implementation of the policies. The policy brief need not be centered on the question of how to increase women's voices in peace processes. Rather, by ensuring that women are the authors of the Policy Brief, it automatically gives women in both countries a credible and effective platform to express their views on exactly how the Afghan and Pakistan processes should be implemented to yield greater success.

By following this framework, PAWFPD has achieved:

- A joint policy brief that illustrates lessons learned and best practices in building peace for both Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- The inclusion of women's perspectives and analysis in the Afghan Peace Process and the National Action Plan.

The authors of the Policy Brief include a diversity of viewpoints from leading women in Afghanistan and Pakistan representing parliamentarians, journalists, academics and civil society representatives and this Policy Brief is the only such venue for this bilateral relationship between the women of Afghanistan and Pakistan. ■



## BACKGROUND

# The Peace Process in Afghanistan

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**THE ROOT CAUSES** for the failure of peace agreements around the globe have often been the lack of popular support and failure to address the underlying causes of the conflict. In the context of Afghanistan, the government's inability to draw out a comprehensive peace plan with well-defined objectives, clear strategy, and identified targets have made the peace efforts "half-hearted and haphazard efforts" which has eroded the legitimacy and credibility of the process. The progress of the Afghan peace process has been hampered by several gaps inherent in the government's approach towards bringing peace. First, the implementation of the process has been strictly top-down in approach with limited links between grassroots actors and the national process; the process has been exclusive, lacking broad-based consultations with men and women from all sectors of society to determine the parameters of an acceptable settlement where the people can establish the type of peace and state they are willing to support; little focus on addressing the grievances fueling the insurgency stemmed from a lack of genuine commitment to reforms; lack of groundwork to prepare a political process that identifies the government's negotiation position, the insurgencies motivations to join such a process, and ultimately a combined vision of the long-term aspirations of all stakeholders for the future of Afghanistan; and lastly the absence of a united definition of terrorism amongst the international community, regional neighbors and the Afghan government. The building blocks for a solid peace include multi-layered but linked processes at the grassroots and national levels that can address the major causes of the conflict with well-defined objectives, strategies and a clear vision. These are missing in the Afghan government and international communities existing approach to negotiating a

comprehensive peace agreement with the insurgency and is reflective of its failures to date.

"We call our brothers [Taliban] to come home and embrace their land" asserted Former Afghan resident Hamid Karzai in November 2009, in his victory speech the day after he was declared president for a second term. Reconciliation had become a top priority for Karzai's administration from 2009 - 2014. Though attempts at reconciling with the insurgency, comprised of the Taliban and other Afghan militant forces, had taken place in the past, it was not until 2009 following the election of Barack Obama as U.S. president that such national attempts began to gain crucial international support, recognition, and momentum. In March 27th 2009, during his remarks on a New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Obama stated that there could be no peace without reconciliation and as such negotiating with the Taliban was now a key political pillar of Washington's strategy in Afghanistan. On 28th January 2010, the Afghan government solidified international support for its peace plan at the London Conference on Afghanistan.

Discussion over engaging the insurgency in a peace dialogue was not a new strategy that was born solely out of the London Conference. Former President Karzai offered the Taliban general amnesty as early as 2002, followed by the New Beginning Program and its successor the Disarmament of Illegally Armed Groups program, the Independent Peace and Reconciliation Commission (PTS) in 2005, and then the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) in 2010. The period prior to 2010 shows many attempts on part of the Afghan government and major political parties to talk to the insurgency. At that time, some Taliban members who did reconcile did so through patronage networks "cutting their path to political reinstatement through the presidential palace or

parliament rather than these multi-million dollar programs." Furthermore, lack of international support prior to 2010 also did considerable damage in preventing positive outcomes from past efforts at reconciliation and reintegration.

In 2001, the removal of the Taliban regime by the United States and the development of the Bonn Agreement provided an opportunity to "recreate the State of Afghanistan," end the conflict and initiate an enabling space for the development of a roadmap for peace. The Bonn Agreement, facilitated by the UN and its special representative of the secretary-general, brought together Afghan military commanders, representatives of Afghanistan's different ethnic groups, expatriate Afghans, and representatives of the exiled monarch—and under substantial pressure from the United States and other external powers reached an agreement on December 5, 2001 which set a schematic roadmap and timetable for establishing peace and security, reconstructing the country, reestablishing key institutions and protecting human rights. While, the agreement recognized the importance of having broad representation in the interim government that was to soon follow (2001-2004) it continued to exclude the Taliban from the Bonn process. At the time, Brahimi stated that "the Bonn Talks were dominated by one group and at that time nobody was ready to consider the partly defeated side of the conflict; therefore, the Taliban were left by themselves, which gave an opportunity to spoilers to regroup." The reasons for why the Taliban were not accommodated was were largely a result of U.S. influence which had taken a staunch stance in the war against terrorism which meant defeating the perpetrators of 9/11 and all those affiliated to them.

Interestingly, many identify this period

as being most conducive for reconciling the Taliban into the new Afghanistan that was to emerge.

The Taliban were ousted from power, they were desperately seeking amnesty and only wanted personal safety to reintegrate back into their communities, displaying no political ambitions. Thus if they were represented in the process instead of being left to fend for themselves, it would have most likely prevented the emergence of the insurgency which we see today. This was an opportune moment lost for reconciliation. Nevertheless, opportunities to redo the mistakes of 2001 were taken later on, such as in the creation of the Independent Peace and Reconciliation Commission (PTS) in 2005, which attempted to reach out to the insurgency and offer amnesty but failed as the U.S. did not support giving “those guilty of terrorism or other serious crimes” amnesty and the UN Security Council passed two resolutions (UNSCR 1267 and 1735) which placed sanctions on the very leaders the PTS wanted to engage with. PTS was followed by the adoption of an Action Plan on Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation in Afghanistan passed by the Cabinet followed by the Amnesty Bill approved by the Lower House of the Afghanistan National Assembly in March 2008. However, these initiatives made little head way till 2010 when the international community, acknowledging the rise in insecurity and its impact on both development efforts and their ability to justify a sustainable withdrawal date, recognized for the very first time that a military approach alone would not bring an end to the Afghan conflict.

At the London Conference Karzai introduced a framework to find a political solution to the ensuing conflict between the Afghan government and the insurgency. With this, Karzai firmly set the stage for a peace process which focused on six points of concern: Peace, Reconciliation and

Reintegration, Security, Good Governance, Fighting Corruption, Economic Development, and Regional Cooperation. The peace and reintegration program was the most crucial component of Karzai’s framework, promoting peace through a political approach by engaging Afghans of all backgrounds in a dialogue. The aim of this approach was to encourage Taliban fighters to renounce violence and join the process for reintegration and reconciliation. However, six years into the peace process there has been limited success and the legitimacy and credibility of both elements of the process—reintegration and reconciliation have been brought to question.

*The Sandwich approach to the Afghan Peace process: The London Conference, the Peace Jirga, and the Kabul International Conference*

**THE LONDON CONFERENCE ON AFGHANISTAN.** President Karzai, along with an audience of over sixty countries gathered in London to pave the way forward with an agreement that highlighted the transference of security responsibilities and a bid to dialogue with the Taliban insurgency. The government’s initiative stemmed from the inevitability that military flexing alone would not suffice in bringing stability to Afghanistan. “Military actions can’t secure Afghanistan, so we initiated a peace process and negotiations with all our Afghan brothers—the Taliban, Hizb-e Islami,” excluding those who are related to Al-Qaeda stated Karzai at the Conference. Though the international community vowed to support the reconciliation process, the U.S. remained inconsistent with its approach. This paradox was a result of the Afghan government’s determination to dialogue with senior Taliban leaders and other anti-government groups such as the Haqqani network

and Hekmatyar’s Hizb-i-Islami. The U.S., refused talks with the top tier of the insurgency. Then U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, had verbosely ruled out talks with these groups referring to them as the “really bad guys in Afghanistan,” while promising support for the foot-soldiers. The basis of Clinton’s assertions was reliant on the view that Mullah Omar and other hardliners were not amenable to renounce their affiliations with al-Qaeda, hence reconciling would be a wasted effort. Nevertheless, with the Amnesty Law in place and the London Conference pledges intact (1.6 billion in debt relief and 500 million for other projects), this set the stage for the Afghan government to attempt to start talks with the Taliban and all groups affiliated with them.

**NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE PEACE JIRGA.** A critical step in the first phase of rolling out the peace process framework, the Afghan government held a National Consultative Peace Jirga (NCPJ), on 2-4 June 2010. This process could have created a national platform for dialogue on peace between grassroots civil society stakeholders and decision makers but instead it reflected a group of hand-selected 1600, “mostly pro-government,” district and village level tribal elders, provincial council members, members of parliament and members of civil society by Karzai. Moreover, the planning committee of the Peace Jirga was also headed by Karzai’s most trusted cabinet members. The three-day event ended with participants endorsing the government’s plans for reconciliation and reintegration, developing The National Consultative Peace Jirga Resolution, and approving the establishment of a High Peace Council (HPC) to guide and monitor the processes. Most importantly the Jirga underscored the participants affirmation in the form of a “demand” as reflected in the Jirga Resolution for all parties in the conflict

to pursue “understanding and negotiations” to bring “lasting peace” and end the war. It also laid out the red lines for negotiations with the insurgency which included the renunciation of violence, the breaking of all ties with international terrorists, and acceptance of the Afghan Constitution.

### KABUL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AFGHANISTAN.

Dubbed as the “Kabul Process” the Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan was held on 20 July 2010. The conference brought together more than 40 countries to agree on a road map that will prepare Afghanistan to assume ownership of its political, security and economic future upon withdrawal of international forces in 2014. Two key pillars of this transition process was the military handover of security responsibilities from U.S.-led NATO forces to the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) and reaching a political settlement with the Taliban and other Afghan insurgents under peace, reconciliation and reintegration efforts. The Kabul Conference witnessed the Afghan government and international community affirm their joint support for the resolutions of the Peace Jirga stating “that all parties engaged in the conflict respect the need to bring lasting peace through mutual understanding and negotiations.”

### *Afghan Peace Process: Framework, Mechanism and Challenges*

#### PEACE JIRGA RESOLUTION.

The Peace Jirga Resolution is the closest document the Afghan government has to a peace framework. The resolution is divided into three components titled ‘Understanding, Negotiating and Agreement for Sustainable Peace,’ ‘Framework for Talks with the Disaffected,’ and Developing Mechanism for Negotiations with the Disaffected.’ The first component generally ambiguously defines the common understanding that is to premise all aspects of the peace process. While it states who the government is not willing to negotiate with, namely foreign extremist elements and international terrorists, it does not define who the

government will negotiate except for exerting that the “initiative shall be for and among Afghans only,” with a mention to the “disaffected” and in some places the “armed opposition,” or just “opposition.” It talks about creating a “comprehensive program” based on NCPJ decisions, namely the APRP, and its transference into “a national and standing strategy.” However, no other strategy, aside from APRP, has yet been created. Furthermore, it calls for all parties involved to avoid putting any “such conditions that can make it impossible” for negotiations to take place, yet the peace Jirga resolution itself sets three conditions for talks mentioned above.

The second component charts a framework for the Afghan government and the international troops to adopt in their attempts to entice the ‘disaffected.’ The most important elements being calls on the international community for freeing of prisoners held on unsubstantiated allegations, removal of the opposition from blacklists, protection and safety for those who join the peace process. It also attempts to address the grievances that fuel the insurgency such as stopping night raids, killing of civilians, and expediting the process of security transition to the ANSF to illustrate to Afghans and the insurgency that the Afghan government is in the driving seat of the peace process. It also calls on the Afghan government to bring about key reforms to “boost public confidence in the government” which in return would facilitate “a successful peace process.” However, in the absence of an Action Plan and Peace Strategy, which the HPC was to develop, this meant there was no pressure from the HPC to ensure the government meet its reform policies.

The third component explains the mechanisms the Afghan government and international community will utilize to negotiate with the Taliban. This includes the formation of the HPC which will be responsible for creating an inclusive environment whereby tribal elders, the broader civil society and representatives of the people will ensure that all Afghans views incorporated in the peace process.

### THE KABUL CONFERENCE

**COMMUNIQUÉ.** It highlighted the role of HPC to “set policy, strengthen political confidence and build consensus,” and welcomed, albeit in “principle,” the Afghan government’s APRP with all Afghan who were willing to respect the three conditions participants of the peace Jirga set. It also saw the international community committing financial support towards the APRP.

Perhaps most important commitment by the international community was the delisting of insurgents from the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1267 Sanctions List.

Since this communiqué, the international community, for its part, has allocated \$784 million for implementation and support of reintegration and reconciliation efforts from 2010-2015. Of these funds, more than \$221 million has been streamed through the UNDP and is monitored by APRP’s Joint Secretariat, a government entity responsible for management and oversight. Aside from the funds being streamed through UNDP, the remaining funds have no mechanism for accountability and there is no clarity as to how those funds are being spent by the Afghan government.

Removing of some Taliban figures from the UN sanctions list has been both a staunch demand of the Taliban and a mandate of the participants of the Peace Jirga. In this regard, in January 2010 the government submitted a list of 50 Taliban figures, which included about 140 Taliban-related persons or entities to delist. From this list several Taliban-era figures were removed from the sanctions list including Abdul Hakim Mujahid who became the deputy Chair of the HPC. In June 2011, the UNSCR even adopted Resolution 1988 and 1989 which drew a separation between the Taliban and Al Qaeda with regards to the sanctions. The council’s adoption of two resolutions symbolically severs the two, which were previously tied in the same UN sanctions regime, and recognizes their different agendas. This was followed with the removal of 14 Taliban figures from the 1267 list and among them four later became members

of the HPC. The release of five Taliban figures from Guantanamo Bay on 31st May 2014, in exchange for US prisoners held by the Taliban Bowe Bergdahl, marked the latest string of releases. Nevertheless, despite these accounts there have been reports of dozens of other Taliban fighters released from prisons across Afghanistan. Many believe that the “release of Taliban prisoners en masse has energized the enemy’s rank and file, promoted a culture of impunity, and undermined the morale of the Afghan forces.”

While the delisting of insurgents and release of prisoners was stipulated by the participants of the peace Jirga there was no mechanism created to ensure the safe return of these former insurgents into Afghan society. There have been no accountable measures to guarantee delisted insurgents would not rejoin the insurgency or play a supporting role for insurgent propaganda and activities. Taliban leaders are now freely traveling within their hideouts in Pakistan and to the Middle East.

**HIGH PEACE COUNCIL.** The High Peace Council was intended to establish the infrastructure for a peace process; however, it has been both ineffective and lacks legitimacy. Many Afghans see the HPC as a government institution that lacks objectivity. Not only were the 70 members of the council selected by the government, it also includes contentious mujahedeen and factional leaders who had been regarded by civil society groups as “having better experience in war rather than peace.” Most of them are accused of committing war crimes and human rights violations during the civil war of the early 90s. The inclusion of so many tainted leaders in the process seriously undermined the legitimacy of the council in the eyes of most Afghans. Additionally, out of 70 members only nine were women, which means that women’s voices remained significantly marginalized.

According to the Center for Strategic and Regional Studies, based in Kabul, the HPC has been hampered by several internal and external factors. Firstly, one of the key reasons for HPC’s failures thus far have been the lack of a specific mechanism and policy for peace. With no strategy in place

there has been “little clarity on what is meant by the term reconciliation and what a workable reconciliation policy would look like.” Furthermore, there is no clarity on what is being negotiated. This is of grave importance as there are no guarantees that the three conditions stipulated in the Peace Jirga Resolution will be protected during Talks. More troubling is that the resolution itself articulates that parties should refrain from setting conditions that could jeopardize the process.

Second, the HPC is unable to act independent of the Afghan government in the peace process. Though created as an independent body, the HPC’s neutrality is riddled with contradictions. It is largely funded by the state and the president holds executive power over APRP; the program overseen by the HPC.

Third, the overall composition of the HPC is problematic as it not only includes jihadi figures accused of alleged war crimes, but these figures are also known as being anti-Taliban which is why it has been so difficult for them to build trust with the Taliban who simply do not trust them. Moreover, the mixture of former Taliban members and anti-Taliban figures has created contradictory thoughts on the council’s objectives. For instance, in February 2014, the HPC’s spokesman came under fire after he criticized the US military presence in Afghanistan and praised Osama bin Laden as a martyr.

In 2016, the newly elected government under President Ghani initiated several changes to the leadership of the HPC in an attempt to breathe new life into a Council that, since 2010, had yet to make any headway in reconciliation efforts. The new structure was provisionally reduced to 50 members, of which 11 positions are reserved for women. Habiba Surabi was made a Deputy amongst five others, and Hasina Safi became HPC secretary. Furthermore, Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani, former Jihadi and Spiritual leader, replaced Salahuddin Rabbani as Chairman of the HPC.

**AFGHANISTAN PEACE AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAM (APRP).** The government launched APRP led by the HPC, implemented

by the Joint Secretariat, and supported by provincial bodies such as the Provincial Peace Committees (PPCs) and the Provincial Joint Secretariat Team (PJSTs). The APRP is designed to be split into two broad categories; the first is pitched at the operational level and focuses on local peace processes involving the bulk of the insurgency through reintegration of the foot soldiers, small groups and local leaders. The second, aims to impact the strategic and political levels with focus on the leadership of the insurgency. However, both the design of APRP and the creation of the HPC came into formation under the guise of the presidential palace and even the passing of the Amnesty Bill was placed under a presidential decree. These steps have diminished the transparency of the peace process in the eyes of Afghans who view them as mere instruments of the state to achieve symbolic peace without any accountability measures.

There have been a number of initiatives and developments which have since taken place in approaching the Taliban over peace negotiations. Concerning reconciliation efforts, there have been multiple reports of talks taking place, conferences have been held between the Taliban’s Political Office in Doha and members of the National Assembly, civil society, leaders of political parties, and women’s groups, various trust-building measures such as removal of some members of the Taliban from sanctions list have taken place including the first ever official meeting held between the Afghan government and the leadership of the Taliban as early as 7th July 2015. However, independent of starting a discourse, raising awareness and shedding light on issues of contention, these achievements have done little in producing concrete steps in starting official negotiations. Concerning reintegration efforts, 10,404 former combatants have joined the reintegration process, of these 10,286 have received financial assistance to reintegrate back into their communities, and 146 small grant projects have been implemented in former combatants’ communities. Nevertheless, the reintegration process has not been able to provide security, long-term employment and other incentives to former combatants



to entice them to remain in the program. Additionally, the rapid implementation of the program has meant that little has been done to offer assistance and rehabilitate communities of former combatants. Even the number of reintegrees and their backgrounds are disputable, as vetting challenges have made for a dubious registration process. Thus, the reintegration program, which was meant for a period of 5 years (2010–2015) has now come to an end and with its implementation being highly unsustainable it is not unlikely to lead to peace at the national level.

**APRP'S GENDER POLICY.** In light of the Afghan government's commitment to mainstreaming gender in all sectors, the Joint Secretariat of the HPC, established APRP's Gender Policy in September 2011. At the National Consultative Peace Jirga in 2010, 1500 participants committed "to act as messengers of peace and take the message of the Jirga to our communities and people in our areas and to cooperate with the local authorities, tribal elders, youth and the women for the objective of ensuring peace." Following the Peace Jirga, on 20th July 2011, the participants of the Kabul Conference highlighted "the centrality of women's rights including political, economic and social equality to the future of Afghanistan as enshrined in the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan." These commitments, including the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan's (NAPWA) goals, have been reflected in APRP's Gender Policy.

Though, the HPC's Joint Secretariat notes that the government has failed to realize its gender commitments, this policy will aim to plug those deficits through the implementation of this Gender Policy at the national and sub-national levels.

APRP's gender policy has made the inclusion of a gender-sensitive framework in all three pillars of its strategy a priority. This is intended to ensure that both men and women equally share leadership and responsibility of activities in negotiations and in the consolidation of peace. It also commits to promoting engagement between

government and women's groups at the national and sub-national levels to ensure women's voices reach policymakers. Most importantly, it aims to involve women in regional and international dialogues on peace, including those taking place with opposition groups, which it deems critical in safeguarding women's concerns. However, since its implementation in 2010 APRP has lacked the will to operationalize these promises.

Female Parliamentarians, civil society organizations, local researchers and activists have repeatedly highlighted these concerns on various local and international platforms, calling on the HPC to fulfill its commitment in protecting women's voices and rights in the peace process.

Since the launch of the peace process women's groups and activists have raised several trepidations concerning the exclusivity and lack of transparency surrounding negotiations with the Taliban. They have used various international platforms such as the second Bonn Conference, the NATO Chicago Summit and the Tokyo Conference to express their fears and concerns. A common concern that was echoed in all these conferences were fears that the Afghan government would try to reach a political settlement with the insurgency at the expense of Afghan's rights and freedoms, especially women's rights. This fear has undoubtedly been reinforced and in retrospect stemmed from women's sense of exclusion and leverage in the reconciliation pillar. At the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn, two selected members of the Afghan civil society, who participated at the Foreign Minister's meeting held prior to the Bonn Conference, stressed on the importance of ensuring that women's rights were respected in the peace and reconciliation process. Additionally, in a side event, to the conference, the Afghan Women's Network issued a declaration in which they also urged the government to be more transparent in its reconciliation and reintegration activities as well as calling on the government to increase women's participation in the High Peace Council by 25 percent. Moreover, on the sidelines of the Chicago Summit, women's groups drafted

an open letter to U.S. President Barack Obama and then President Hamid Karzai, also stipulating for more "participation by women in peace talks with the Taliban and institutionalized guarantees of women's rights in any reconciliation agreements with the Taliban." In the Tokyo Conference, Afghan civil society members once again stressed in their declaration that "there needs to be a commitment for women to have a role in the decision-making processes." Nonetheless, despite these efforts, few believe that the Afghan government or international community will take notice and move beyond just addressing these concerns on paper and actually see their genuine implementation on the ground.

In APRP's Gender Policy, resolution 1325 was entrenched as a means to ensure that women's rights were protected and that women were included in any conflict resolution process. "What will we have to sacrifice with reconciliation? Is it women's affairs, is it democracy, is it human rights, is it free press? For me that is not peace. For me that is a huge prison," exclaimed Fatima Gailani, former President of the Afghan Red Crescent Society. Yet, since the Afghan government announced it had begun talks with various members of the insurgency, the assurance that women would be represented in these talks has all but disappeared.

### *Impediments to Afghan Peace Process*

The peace process has been mired by several policy challenges stemming with the primary shortcomings being the failure to incorporate more bottom-up approaches, lack of local ownership and the absence of a clear roadmap for peace.

### **NO BOTTOM-UP APPROACH.**

A comprehensive peace process must be connected at three levels, it must include top-level negotiations, bottom-level grassroots healing, and middle level organized civil society involvement. Yet the Afghan peace process has remained the prerogative of the state who have



designed and implemented the process without consultation with grassroots actors. Thus, despite the overwhelming consensus on the need for a peaceful solution to the conflict, there remain fundamental questions over; whether the time is right for such negotiations? What are the red lines for negotiations? What is meant by reconciliation? What shape would an eventual settlement look like? What is the way forward after a peace agreement is reached? And, what would will that peace mean to different sectors of Afghan society, especially minority groups? These concerns have been raised by local think-tanks and research institutes, it has been voiced by civil society activists, women's groups, student associations, non-governmental organizations and journalists, it has also been highlighted by non-state actors such as tribal elders, religious leaders, and other influential persons at the subnational level. While many acknowledge that actual negotiations should be kept quiet, the government still has an obligation as highlighted in the Peace Jirga Resolution to keep the public informed about the framework of for talks so the public understands what kind of agreement they are being asked to endorse. This would help guarantee that the peace process remains broad-based and that the parameters of an acceptable settlement are founded on a national consensus. Sidelining civil society and local actors will diminish the local legitimacy any peace settlement with the Taliban need for it to be sustainable.

#### **LACK OF LOCAL OWNERSHIP.**

External state-builders often intervene in conflict zones with the aim of “building functioning and self-sustaining state structures” which they can leave behind when they withdraw. The Afghan peace process, defined as an ‘Afghan-led and Afghan owned’ process was the first actual attempt by the international community to promote local ownership in Afghanistan. However, local ownership has only been treated as a rhetoric in the Afghan context. Despite, vouching support for the peace process in 2010, the U.S. and its allies still

remain hesitate to support talks with certain elements of the insurgency. It was not until 2013 that US officials began to let go of their opposition to negotiations however by that time the Taliban, with their own internal differences on peace talks, became highly skeptical of US and Afghan government intentions. Moreover, this made the Taliban recognize the lack of authority the Afghan government had to pursue talks since most of the crucial demands they had belong to the discretion of the US and UN such as removal of sanctions list, withdrawal time-line of troops, and release of prisoners. As such, the Taliban have repeatedly refused to talk to the Afghan government and have instead requested to only hold discussions with the US and other members of the international community- something the Afghan government is staunchly opposed, creating a stalemate in the peace process efforts.

#### **ABSENCE OF A ROADMAP**

**FOR PEACE.** Calls for a roadmap for peace has been a constant demand of the local population however the Afghan government has failed to produce a roadmap leaving many to wonder who are we negotiating with? When are we negotiating? And what are we negotiating? There is a need for encouraging informed decision-making on the critical issues affecting the peace process and the future of the country. Without it an inclusive, comprehensive, and bottom-up roadmap for peace that is agreed upon and founded at the grassroots level amongst a wide sector of Afghan demography and society, which can act as a much needed guide for the Afghan government, HPC and all other actors involved in reconciliation and peace efforts, cannot be developed. A roadmap, not withholding a wide spectrum of local perspectives, such as the recent roadmap created by the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) (by representatives from Afghanistan, China, US and Pakistan) will ultimately fail, as did this QCG roadmap. ■



*Not only were the 70 members of the council (HPC) selected by the palace, it also included contentious mujahedeen and factional leaders who had been regarded by civil society groups as ‘having better experience in war rather than peace.’*

## BACKGROUND

# Pakistan's National Action Plan

IN DECEMBER OF 2009, Pakistan created the National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA) in order to coordinate federal and provincial governments' law enforcement, and military and civilian intelligence agencies in their efforts against terrorism. Through NACTA, these institutions were intended to come together to discuss and analyze data to guide counter-terror operations, as well as deliberate new challenges to internal security. However, NACTA's power remained limited until 2013, when Pakistan's parliament passed a bill that created a board of governors for NACTA, headed by the Prime Minister.

In February of 2014, the Pakistani government approved the National Internal Security Policy (NISP), a 64-point plan aimed at modernizing the criminal justice system, creating better oversight of mosques and madrasas, and executing a number of other interventions, with NACTA leading its implementation.

Since the reform of the criminal justice system, too, had been negligible, circumstances necessitated the enactment of the speedy-trial legislation – the Protection of Pakistan Act (PPA) in July of 2014. The PPA gave power to security agencies – such as the military – in order to apprehend suspects and or detain them for longer periods of time, without any legal requirement to produce the suspects before a court or announcing their captivity.

However, the counter-terror efforts got a real push with a brazen terrorist attack on the Army Public School (APS) at Peshawar on December 16 2014. It left about 143 people dead – including children and school teachers. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan – TTP – (a Pakistani terrorist outfit) claimed responsibility for the strike which sparked national outrage and demands for action. In the following weeks, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif ordered two immediate actions: first, he lifted the 2008 ban on the death penalty,

and second, he approved special military courts to speedily try all terror suspects, including civilians. Both measures were incorporated in the 21st constitutional amendment that was passed in January 2015. One of the consequences of the intense deliberations in the weeks after the APS attack was the pivotal National Action Plan (NAP).

### *National Action Plan: Framework, Mechanism and Challenges*

#### **FRAMEWORK AND MECHANISMS.**

The National Action Plan, which was agreed upon by all political parties, is a 20-point national security strategy constructed in an effort to curb terrorism in the wake of the Peshawar attack. The 20 points are as follows:

1. The enforcement of executions of terrorists sentenced to death.
2. The establishment of special military courts that will operate for two years.
3. No armed militant group or organization will be allowed to operate.
4. NACTA will be strengthened and activated.
5. Any literature or media spreading hate, violence, or extremism will be censored.
6. All funding for terrorists and terrorist groups will be eliminated.
7. Banned organizations will not be allowed to re-establish themselves under another name.
8. A special anti-terrorist force will be created.
9. Action will be taken to stop religious extremism and protect minorities.
10. The government will register and regulate all madrassas.
11. Media that glorifies terrorism will be banned.
12. Reforms in FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) will be given priority to ensure the speedy return of internally displaced persons.
13. The communication networks of terrorists will be dismantled.
14. The government will take steps to stop the spread of terrorism on the Internet and social media.
15. There will be no space left for terrorism, including Punjab.
16. The ongoing operation in Karachi will continue.
17. Stakeholders will empower the Balochistan government.
18. Decisive action will be taken against sectarian elements.
19. A comprehensive policy for the repatriation of Afghan refugees will be developed.
20. The government will focus on legislation to ensure provincial intelligence organizations get access to terrorist communication networks.

The National Action Plan committee includes a central committee chaired by the Prime Minister and nine cabinet members, as well as 15 subcommittees in charge of more specific NAP- related issues. These committees include

provincial bureaucrats, military officials, representatives from intelligence agencies, and the likes.

### Challenges

As the creation of the committees was never written into the National Action Plan, many worry that these committees are fast becoming a second governing system in Pakistan. However, many are even more troubled by the amount of power given to the military. With the military in control of both the apprehension of terrorists and national security, there is concern over civilian safety. For example, after the implementation of NAP, hanging executions increased from 7 in 2014 to 327 in 2015.

Similarly, from December 24 to March 25, 2016 over 32,000 people were arrested on terrorism-related charges. Though these numbers could be interpreted as an increase in terrorist apprehension rates, only 129 of the 32,000 were actually found to belong to the TTP or any other terrorist outfit. Also, most of those executed in 2015 were not terrorists either. Similarly, most of the radical religio-political groups, some even blacklisted by both the Pakistani government and the UN, continued to operate freely, in part due to a) tolerance by the security establishment of some India-focused groups such as Lashkare-Taiba considered as “good” Taliban, and b) expedience and electoral considerations by the civilian political elites, who refrain from taking tough actions against such groups and their members.

Lastly, as the government attempts to cut off finances to terrorist organizations by reinforcing scrutiny through banking channels, many of these organizations continue to operate as a “charity” in order to receive funds from different sources. And it is a formidable challenge to choke and cut off sources of financing because most of the funding comes in cash or kind. Secondly,

the banks and the government lack the real capacity to scrutinize flow of funds to charitable organizations. The latter also use non-conventional, non-banking channels to circumvent laws and avoid detection.

**IMPEDIMENTS TO THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN.** The largest impediment to the NAP is the lack of structure. Its success hinges on better, independent policing, professional investigation as well as reform of the criminal procedure code. Despite lofty rhetoric by the government, there has been little progress on these issues so far. Also, the ineffectiveness of NACTA, whose board hasn’t met together in over three years and lastly, a lack of strong political will to truly enact these changes represent some of the other challenges. Following the September 18 attack on an Indian military base at Uri in Kashmir and the ensuing Indo-Pakistan tensions, however, have prompted another series of meetings and serious talks on how to effectively pursue the goals expressed in the NAP.

The lack of structure is not an issue that can be easily fixed. With a lack of private think tanks throughout Pakistan, it is difficult to generate insight and analysis about the situations both the NAP and Pakistan are facing. However, institutes such as the independent Pak Institute for Peace Studies as well as the Center for Research and Security Studies have emerged as the leaders in research and analysis on counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization. It leads “to a growing hope that these new institutions can generate a variety of solutions to help restructure NAP as well as Pakistan. Another impediment to the National Action Plan is the tension between the Pakistani police force and the military. With the introduction of the Counter-Terrorism Force (CTF) into the NAP, national and regional security has become confusing. Similarly, the specially-trained

CTF on average earn \$500 more than their counterparts, which is a source of resentment that could hinder cooperation between the two groups. The CTF is also trained to operate in high-risk operations, while the normal police forces are not. Yet the CTF lack in long-term training and general terrorist know-how that the police force has. Though it would be optimal if the two groups could operate as a whole, the International Crisis Group comments on how “reliance on parallel forces, with a separate chain of command, undercuts accountability and transparency, while marginalizing and undermining civilian institutions.”

Lastly, the over-empowerment of the Pakistani military, on the one hand, has led to less strategic planning and more action-through-blunt-force sort of operations. The civilian government, on the other, suffers from inertia and lack of pro-active planning. Nor are the civilians ready to prioritize the legal justice reform and make the police professional and autonomous. This automatically results in the military taking the lead on issues that primarily belong to the civilian domain.

The National Action Plan is in essence a reiteration of commitment against terrorism and radicalization. The military and the civilian institution are the two wheels for it. And its success will depend on simultaneous movement by the two.

The Center for Research and Security Studies Annual Security Report 2015 reflected a marked decline in casualties from violence; from a loss of 7,611 persons in 2014, the number dropped to 4,653 persons in 2015, a drop of more than 40%. The violence-related casualties in Pakistan were 5687 in 2013 which increased to 7650 in 2014. The total rise in casualties is registered as 34.5 %. The first two quarters of 2016 also recorded considerable decline in acts of terrorism, according to CRSS Quarterly reports.

The Pakistani government claims to have reduced terrorism by 70% throughout Pakistan since the implementation of the National Action Plan, according to the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS). Despite the decrease in terrorist activity, careful analysis suggests that Pakistan has yet to go a long way to take down terror groups such as TTP and various splinters of it, including those loyal to the ISIL. The Operation Zarb-e- Azb has dented these groups and for now slowed down terrorist organizations' activities, yet they remain a formidable challenge in the long run.

It was against this context that the army chief Gen Raheel Sharif publicly vented his frustration over the government's poor progress on NAP, warning that the military's gains during Operation Zarb-i-Azb were being lost. "Unless all prongs deliver meaningfully and all inadequacies are addressed, remnants of terrorism would continue to simmer and long-term peace and stability would remain a distant dream," the general warned at a military high command conference in August. Some of his concerns related to poor prosecution of cases of terrorism; lack of progress on seminary reforms; little focus on the capacity building of civilian law enforcement agencies and inadequate allocation of funds required for countering terrorism.

Though the National Action Plan is a step in the right direction for peace in Pakistan, it has many flaws that prevent it from accomplishing its lofty goals. First, it is misconceived as a plan which it is not. It is a mere reiteration of commitment to enforce existing laws.

Secondly, it largely relies on the use of hard military and police power. Operation Zarbe Azb – launched in June 2014 against terrorist havens in North Waziristan – symbolizes the hard-power strategy. Little calibrated thought has gone into as to how to reinforce and speedily apply the existing legal framework through modern-day reforms to neutralize terrorists and extremist ideologies.

Third, much of the commitment ingrained in NAP still relies on the antiquated British era criminal

procedures code (CrPC) of 1960 and the Police Act 1861. Given the new trans-national nature of threats facing Pakistan, these laws need radical reform.

Fourth, a corrupt and inefficient police, largely dependent on the whims of the civilian ruling elites only indirectly enhances the army's role in counter-terrorism.

Fifth, for their own electoral interests, political elites sitting in national and provincial parliaments lack the courage to challenge terror networks and their apologists such as socio-political parties and their charities. Counter-terrorism and peace require a well thought out whole-of-government strategy and deployment of all means of civilian and military security.

In the absence of such an approach, Pakistan will continue to bear the monstrosity of terrorism and its fight against non-state actors – both terrorist and criminal networks – will largely remain a patch-work. Ultimately, it is up to the government, military, and citizens of Pakistan to cease the flow of terrorism and religious radicalization before it becomes absolutely impossible to stop it. ■

***"Despite the decrease in terrorist activity, careful analysis suggests that Pakistan has yet to go a long way to take down terror groups such as TTP and various splinters of it, including those loyal to the ISIL. The Operation Zarb-e- Azb has dented these groups and for now slowed down terrorist organizations' activities, yet they remain a formidable challenge in the long run."***





# PRIMARY RESEARCH

## Afghan Peace Process - Conversations with Afghan People

### *Background and Methodology*

FROM MAY INTO JUNE of 2016 researchers surveyed an assortment of women from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Researchers gathered information from these women on the role of women in their countries, the effects of violent extremism and conflict on women, the development of peace processes in Afghanistan and Pakistan along with the space existing for women's engagement, participation and inclusion in those processes.

The women identified for participation in this research project provided information through close-ended questionnaires supported by brief guided interviews. Once all data was collected, trends in quantitative data were identified while a small team of researchers reviewed and conducted coding of qualitative data provided through open-ended questions and well as the guided interviews.

### *Noteworthy Results and Analysis*

Review of the results provided several very clear conclusions along with a series of more nuanced points for further exploration.

#### *On the Afghan Peace Process and conflicts with the Taliban*

Taken out of the context of general language and applied more specifically to the Afghan Peace Process, a broad majority (80%) of women interviewed expressed knowledge of the peace process. When asked to explain the process however, a significant portion of respondents had no response or could generally express only limited knowledge of the subject matter (38%) despite generally possessing positive attitudes and hope toward the success of the efforts (22%). Recurrent themes in qualitative analysis of respondents' commentary on the subject

included the importance of women's rights, the challenge of internal government divisions with particular regard to the need for national unity and the importance of resolving internal conflicts.

On the question of the peace process some respondents expressed general distrust in regional actors specifically with regard to non-state actors. With regard to regional actors, when asked specifically whether or not some political agreement with the Taliban might bring about peace and stability in Afghanistan a majority (61.1%) of respondents believed this to be the case. Details on the role of the Taliban in the peace process brought to light a dependence upon the Taliban's actual desire for peace (37.5%). Participants additionally identified the challenge presented by interference of foreign governments (12%) noting Pakistan in particular as a spoiler to peace processes.

When asked if there were any points the government should refuse to negotiate with the Taliban around, respondents comments were varied but broadly centered on the themes of foreign policy and the internal actions of government, along with military and security issues. Respondents also highlighted the importance of sovereignty of the state as well as the need not to violate the constitution of Afghanistan in efforts to bring about peace.

Respondents were asked their opinions on the reintegration of combatants into society, and though many offered no response or uncertainty (28%), those who did respond expressed significant concerns in strong language over the ineffective nature of the process so far (66%). Those who expressed concerns regarding the process of reintegration highlighted worries about what if anything prevented ex-combatants from returning to militancy as well as a general lack of sustainable monitoring of these individuals after their reintegration.

#### *On violent extremism and women in Afghanistan*

One overwhelming conclusion was that the vast majority of women interviewed (more than 85%) noted violent extremism as an important issue in their lives, with an additional portion (9.5%) identifying the issue as somewhat important and none of the respondents identifying violent extremism as a non-issue in their lives. This broad response prepares the stage for much of the later analysis of questions posed to the Afghan women surveyed.

Along similar lines when asked more specifically whether or not violent extremism effected their daily lives, more than 9 out of 10 participants responded yes with the remaining portion stating that it does somewhat. Here as in the earlier question, no participants responded that violent extremism is a non-issue in their lives. While this may not seem significant given the context of ongoing conflict in and around Afghanistan, this response continues to set the stage for later feedback on the impact of violent extremism on the lives of women. When asked to explain with more depth what violent extremism meant to them, the women generally categorized the term as a use of violence to impose certain ideologies or a way for non-state actors to challenge the state (38.1% each), though nearly a quarter (23.8%) of respondents provided other explanations spanning a range from noting violent extremism as a synonym for war, to expressions of looting, destruction and the difficulty of rebuilding.

Early on during the interviewing process, participants were asked to identify the varied ways in which violent extremism influenced their lives. Insecurity at home (42.9%), at work (61.9%), in the lives of their children at school and when traveling (both 47.6%) were central among the concerns highlighted.

Through qualitative analysis of respondents' commentary, additional overarching themes of displacement and threats around the workplace were also noted. Given the demographics of the women interviewed (71% married, 47% between the ages of 26–40) these responses paint a valuable picture of the concerns of an age group of Afghan women.

Given the above commentary on the influence of violent extremism in the lives of the surveyed participants, it should be noted also that participants saw distinct differences in the ways this extremism affects men and women. More than three-quarters (76%) of respondents informed interviewers directly that violent extremism in their community affects women differently than men. On explaining their responses in greater depth, respondents highlighted concerns for the safety of their children and alluded to vulnerabilities to other forms of violence that affected men less. Finally some participants noted an underlying lack of voice in their communities contributing to this vulnerability.

The consequences of violent extremism on women are many and varied. Participants in these questionnaires and interviews noted several overarching consequences. First among these concerns was a loss in livelihood (42.9% with an additional 9.5% responding with related economic concerns) this response is particularly noteworthy in that a majority of the women interviewed were educated (83.3% having matriculated through school and 66.6% having completed some higher form of education) yet few (30%) reported any current form of occupation. Other key concerns noted were restricted movement and shrinking public spaces (28.6% each). In deeper conversation with participants it was noted that these issues did not affect women equally across socio-economic boundaries and that in particular there is a rural/urban divide which shapes the challenges women face.

The most regularly presented sources of conflict revolved around political (66%) and ethnic tensions (57%). Political instability (42.9%), social discrimination (33.3%), and religion (23.8%) rounded out the other key causes of conflict identified by respondents.

***Among this majority of participants expressing general positivity (50%) a substantial portion (20%) noted that though the idea of the peace process in Afghanistan is positive, it has never been well defined.***

#### ***On the role of women in society and peace processes***

One of the broader themes of the latter half-of the interviews focused on the role of women in society, institutions and spaces to contribute to the peace process. All of those who responded noted that women are not adequately represented in the institutions of policing, the armed forces, the National Assembly, provincial assemblies, local government, the judicial system, civil service/government jobs or the media. Interviewers were instructed to probe for more depth on these responses through follow-up questions. During this period of follow-up, one of the core points made in explaining why this lack of inclusion might exist was the general lack of opportunities or space for women's participation in these institutions. Participants additionally alluded to, or noted specifically, trends of male domination in their communities and societies.

When asked to generally explain their understanding of peace processes, participants expressed generally positive attitudes, but also demonstrated limited understanding of the term or perhaps the question. Among this majority of participants expressing general positivity (50%) a substantial portion (20%) noted that though the idea of the peace process in Afghanistan is positive, it has never been well defined. Many of those who provided responses associated the term strongly with concepts of stability and security (30%) as

well as broader ideas of reconciliation and or conflict resolution (20%).

On the subject of peace processes in Afghanistan there was some disagreement on whether or not women in Afghanistan have adequate representation in peace processes. A significant portion (38.1%) of the interviewed women stated that to a certain extent women do have adequate representation in peace processes, with a smaller proportion of women stating either that Afghan women don't really (19%) have a role in the process or a smaller portion (5%) that women don't have a role at all. On further inquiry, women expressed the recurrent themes of a lack of public space or opportunity for women to engage (33%) or broader domination of Afghan society by men (14%). One noteworthy bit of feedback revolved around the role of women in these processes as largely symbolic in nature.

Keeping on the subject of the potential for women to be prevented from inclusion in the peace process, respondents were asked to identify some key reasons women might be kept out of the process. Though responses were many and varied the most commonly raised issues revolved around cultural barriers, religious pressure (47% each) and an overarching lack of political will (19%) to include women.

The question of sustainable peace and the role women can play in Afghanistan was posed and here participants noted the need for equality, highlighting the significance of women as a substantial and overlooked proportion of the population and overall noting the need for women to take a more active role in the peace process (66%). These expressions of the need for women in the process were contrasted by participants noting reluctance of the role women could feasibly play in this process or overarching distrust in the prospect of peace and any progress toward it (14%). Finally, some respondents noted the prospect of bringing about peace starting in the household, with a focus on youth engagement and familial ties (9.5%). ■

# PRIMARY RESEARCH

## Pakistan National Action Plan - A Conversation with Pakistani Women

### *Background and Methodology*

#### **REGARDLESS OF THE DEBATE**

over effectiveness of the National Action Plan (NAP) and its deficiencies, it can be argued that sustainable results require an inclusive approach. One of the least talked about deficiency of the NAP is its omission of women both as victims and stakeholders in the sphere of countering extremism and terrorism in Pakistan. Over the last decade, thousands of Pakistani women have suffered as direct and indirect victims. However, within a patriarchal society, women are insufficiently considered in CVE efforts, and the path to their engagement remains ill-defined. Perhaps most underappreciated is the potential role of women as partners and allies in efforts to counter violent extremism. This is despite the fact that Pakistani women are well-positioned to temper radical beliefs and bridge the social divides that fuel this bloodshed. Historically, the idea of women leaders in peace and security is not new to the country. Pakistan had the first female Prime Minister and Speaker of Parliament in a predominantly Muslim country. The Pakistani parliament passed over 20 laws in the last 10 years to protect women and children, largely due to women's advocacy efforts. They are often the first to propose creative, nonviolent solutions to prevent and resolve conflict—and to act and rebuild in the face of disaster. It is therefore high-time that women in Pakistan are engaged to potentially combat violent extremism, but it would require a focused, concerted effort to reach out to, counter-message, and actively engage the vital female constituency. While the international community has passed a series of United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs) that provide a foundation to better engage women in promoting peace and conflict resolution, including the landmark resolution on women, peace, and security, UNSCR 1325,

which called for special measures to increase women's participation in peace processes and to protect them from conflict-related, gender-based violence, Pakistan needs to implement it in letter and spirit specifically in the sphere of emerging security issues, such as countering violent extremism.

From May into June 2016, researchers included an assortment of women from diverse cultural, social n economic backgrounds in a survey carried out in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Researchers gathered information from these women on the role of women in their countries, the effects of violent extremism and conflict on women, the development of peace processes in Afghanistan and Pakistan along with the space existing for women's engagement, participation and inclusion in those processes.

The women identified for participation in this research project provided information through close-ended questionnaires supported by brief guided interviews. Once all data was collected, trends in quantitative data were identified while a small team of researchers reviewed and conducted coding of qualitative data provided through open-ended questions and well as the guided interviews.

### *Noteworthy Results and Analysis*

Review of the results provided several very clear conclusions along with a series of more nuanced points for further exploration.

#### *On Pakistan's National Action Plan*

Taken out of the context of general language and applied more specifically to the Pakistan's National Action Plan (NAP), a majority (74.1%) of women interviewed expressed knowledge of the action plan. When asked to explain the plan these respondents were able to do so clearly expressing several recurrent themes including the NAP's identification as a

government plan to reduce, address or resolve issues around terrorism (42.8%). Respondents also identified the plan as a general national security strategy and a means toward long term sustainability, accountability and peace. Throughout the interviewing process, respondents generally expressed a great deal of certainty in their responses, however when asked whether or not Pakistan's NAP might bring about peace and stability in Pakistan a plurality of respondents (50%) and while few (just over 3%) didn't believe the plan could succeed, less than half (46.2%) thought that it could. When interviewers inquired further respondents noted a lack of results (19%) or references to inherent and unfixable flaws in the plan. Even many (25%) among those hopeful for the success of the plan referred to flaws in implementation or more broadly the need for accountability to bring about any actual change (3%).

With this lack of faith in the plan identified respondents were asked to explain what issues might need to be addressed in order for the National Action Plan to be successful. Here opinions varied dramatically but generally respondents spoke to a few key issues. First among the issues identified was the need to target root causes of extremism to determine the drivers of violence, contrasted with at least the perception that the NAP only addresses problems as they arrive (15%). Other themes included challenges related to the economy, security and the need for basic education as a precursors to the goals of the NAP (15%). The need for protections for women and afterward the value of their inclusion in the NAP's processes was identified as an issue needed in advance of the NAP. Finally respondents noted underlying issues of corruption and institutional or structural problems, including the need for the NAP to address institutions supporting militants.

Participants were asked specifically whether or not the government has been effective in ensuring women's voices are included in Pakistan's NAP and a majority of those asked were uncertain (53.8%). Among those who provided a response the majority (38.5%) didn't believe so, and went on to express lack of representation along with the government's disinterest in including women.

Respondents were asked their opinions on the reintegration of militants into society and though many offered no response or uncertainty (59.3%) those who did respond were narrowly in favor of reintegration (25.9%) though they expressed concerns over the difficulty of reintegration despite recognizing its importance in creating a lasting peace.

### *On violent extremism and women in Pakistan*

One overwhelming conclusion was that the vast majority of women interviewed (more than 88.9%) noted violent extremism as an important issue in their lives, with an additional portion (3.7%) identifying the issue as somewhat important. A minority (7.4%) yet still a significant portion of women interviewed however expressed that violent extremism was not an issue of personal importance. Interestingly despite the minority of respondents who noted that violent extremism wasn't an issue of personal importance, when asked whether or not violent extremism effected their daily lives, no participants suggested that it did not. On the contrary the large majority (85%) of participants responded yes with the remaining portion stating that it has affected their lives somewhat, to one degree or another. This difference is potentially relevant as even where respondents did not see extremism as an issue of personal concern they recognized that it did in some way or another influence the way they lived. These generalities would set the stage for later feedback on the impact of violent extremism on the lives of women in Pakistan.

When asked to explain with more depth what violent extremism meant to them the majority of women defining the term

as the use of violence to impose certain ideologies (84.6%) or a way for non-state actors to challenge the state (38.5%) notably a significant portion of participants (23%) gave answers that were inclusive of both broad categorizations or definitions. Finally a small portion of participants (7.6%) expressed in their own terms more open-ended definitions encompassing any who would restrict others ability to practice individual freedoms.

Early on during the interviewing process, participants were asked to identify the ways in which violent extremism influenced their lives. In the population interviewed, insecurity at the workplace, and in the lives of their children at school (both 48.1%) were noted as the most telling concerns though impact on the ability to travel (37%) was high as well. Notably concerns for safety at home (7.4%) were very low, a response potentially worthy of further follow-up or exploration in the future.

Through qualitative analysis of respondents' commentary, additional overarching themes of fear and/or mental distress were noted as central impacts of extremism, along with general feelings of insecurity in public places and fear for the safety of loved ones.

In light of the above themes, it is important to note that the women interviewed were evenly split on whether or not any differences existed in the ways violent extremism effects the lives of men and women in Pakistan. Though a slight majority (44.4%) of participants saw the effects of violent extremism on men and women as different, a very close proportion (40.7%) argued that the two groups are effected equally. On explaining their responses in greater depth, a key response among those on either side of the issue was that women are more vulnerable to targeting than men (26%) or noting that women are effected indirectly through harm to family and friends.

Among those who viewed women as more vulnerable common themes included the vulnerability of women to be suppressed or pushed out of public space, limiting their ability to be heard (27%) other common themes were limitations on women's mobility and discriminatory laws

influencing women more severely than men. Finally among those who expressed equality in the influence of violent extremism among men and women, a common point (18.1%) was that women and men are targeted indiscriminately by extremists in their attacks.

The consequences of violent extremism on women are many and varied, participants in these questionnaires and interviews noted several overarching consequences. First among these concerns was a restriction in mobility, and the ability to come and go freely (77.8%) nearly as strongly women noted a shrinking of public space (63%) along with to a lesser degree a loss of livelihood or economic opportunity (40.7%) other concerns raised included general sentiments of fear and vulnerability.

Later in interviews after some rapport was built with respondents, interviewers touched briefly on the subject of underlying sources of conflict in respondents' communities. Responses on this subject varied heavily but the following key sources were identified. Above all else (74.1%) was the identified issue of social discrimination. Religion and poverty (66.7%) were identified as two other key causes of conflict though a number of respondents (11%) were careful to note that the misuse of religion rather than religion itself was the cause. Rounding out the highest identified causes of conflict, ethnic tensions (51.9%) and political instability (48.1%) were identified.

### *On the role of women in society and peace processes*

One of the broader themes of the latter half-of the interviews focused on the role of women in society, institutions and spaces to contribute to the peace process. The vast majority (72.7%) of women interviewed felt that women were adequately represented in the institutions of policing, the armed forces, the National Assembly, provincial assemblies, local government, the judicial system, civil service/government jobs or the media. Interviewers were instructed to probe for



*“One fruitful line of questioning presented to respondents was on sustainable peace and the role women can play in Pakistan.”*

more depth on these responses for both women who thought that women were adequately represented and those that did not.

Despite the majority of respondents' view that women are adequately represented in institutions, many (45%) identified gender discrimination tied to cultural norms (12%), religious concerns (12%) and a male-dominated society (12%) as key limitations to women's representation in institutions. Some participants noted that although representation exists it is often not enough and several spoke to an issue of the quality of women's roles in these institutions (12.5%), this issue of “quality” of women's roles would be a recurrent theme throughout participant responses in the later portions of the interviews. Asked to generally explain their understanding of peace processes, participants expressed a great deal of understanding and clarity without prompts in expressing common themes of peace-building (45%) with many participants noting language on developing gradually toward a state of peace or an end of violence. Another core theme expressed by participants was of the need for consensus building and/or mutual consent based on equal participation in the process (16%). A last recurrent theme throughout participants' open-ended responses was the concept of community and/or communal agreement on principles (20.8%). Here it is worth noting that demographically those interviewed were by and large educated (26.9% possessing graduate degrees with another 73.1% possessing professional degrees).

On the subject of peace processes in Pakistan the majority of those questioned expressed that women were not adequately represented in peace processes (44%

responded “not really” or “not at all”) contrasted by a significant portion in the minority (25%) who felt that yes to some degree or another women were adequately involved. On further inquiry into this subject, women once again referred to the recurrent theme of women as symbols or “window dressing” whose roles relied more on acting as “fluff” than of being real actors (16%).

Keeping on the subject of the potential for women to be prevented from inclusion in the peace process, respondents were asked to identify some key reasons women might be kept out of the process. Though responses varied the most commonly raised issues revolved around cultural barriers (57.7%) preventing women's inclusion or a lack of basic capacity or literacy (46.2%), other core issues identified were a general lack of political will or religious pressures (each at 34.6%) preventing women from being included in peace processes.

One fruitful line of questioning presented to respondents was on sustainable peace and the role women can play in Pakistan. Here respondents offered insight on the access women have to typically inaccessible or underserved parts of the community. Many (50%) highlighted women's access to women and children, particularly on the subject of youth respondents noted the ability of women and mothers to influence young people in an effort to raise “moderate and respectful” children. Daughters in particular were noted as being a key way to build sustainable peace in Pakistan. Other essential themes identified included women's ability to provide alternative view points (12%) natural roles for women in advocacy, awareness, negotiation and peace-building (24%) and women's ability to speak to specific issues such as gender violence. ■



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Conditions, Perspectives, and Recommendations

**BASED ON THEIR WORK TOGETHER**, the Afghan and Pakistani authors would recommend the following to facilitate peace and increase women's perspectives in the peace efforts pursued in their region:

### GENERAL

- The importance of addressing community-level needs cannot be ignored. Therefore, it is important to prioritize community-level peace building by addressing these needs in parallel to national efforts.
- Peace processes must be more inclusive of all groups – different ethnicities, ideologies, beliefs, and the like. Representation is central in policy and decision-making roles.
- The necessity of a clear roadmap to peace cannot be overstated. It is crucial to develop and support mechanisms for increased transparency and accountability.

### WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING

- Because young adult women are a core group for investment of time, resources, and support, it is important to promote context-specific peace building to these women.
- Because women have more influence in their households, it is crucial to educate these women on peace-building. Specific institutions can target these inaccessible women through other women in the community, using existing programs and community-based networks to spread awareness.
- Opportunities for women in the public space are shrinking due to physical and psychological insecurity caused by conflict. Therefore, it is crucial that the narratives and conditions are changed for women in order for them to more easily express themselves. This level of reform would require reforms in how gender policies and strategies are implemented, as well as in education and the media.

- The corruption that prevents resources from reaching women in poverty needs to be addressed. This requires reform in the allocation of assistance resources, as well as a reinforcement of accountability mechanisms.

- Within state institutions, women must be included in decision-making processes. These women need to be supported by a policy-making toolbox that ensures that they and other women use policy research and advocacy to increase their voices.

- Approaches to women's participation in peace must be sensitive to local contexts. Traditional mechanisms of peace and conflict resolution already exist in Afghanistan, so it is important that they be drawn upon in these situations.

### AFGHANISTAN

- Rebuilding and reforming the connection between the government and the public is key. Frequent communication and outreach by the Afghan government with its citizenry is needed to build public trust in state institutions and to strengthen the democratic process and this can be done by holding on-going dialogue between the two.
- Civil society organizations are too focused on trying to convince the populace to support a political peace process rather than military action as a means to end the conflict in Afghanistan. However, merely building support, is futile – civil society organizations need to also pay heed to building local awareness and engagement around the peace process.
- The peace process in Afghanistan largely elite-centric and top-down,

therefore in order to include grassroots perspectives and build a national consensus around peace efforts bottom-up approaches need to be applied simultaneously.

- While the public understands the need for secrecy around peace talks, many also argue that the government still has an obligation to share its peace framework with the public.

- Ensure implementation of National Action Plan 1325, National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan and Elimination of Violence Against Women in Afghanistan as they directly address barriers of women's participation in peace processes. This should be carried out by the female members of the High Peace Council in cooperation with female civil society members who should create a joint mechanism to monitor implementation of the action plan and women's role in the peace and reconciliation efforts.

- It is crucial for women's roles be strengthened, not only outside of the household, but even more so in the household, recognizing the agency of mothers and wives. Thus, by creating mechanisms to include this demographic in the decision-making process, they will be able to build and support the generation that follows them since the issues that this demographic face not only affects mothers and wives, but children and families as well.

- Peace means livelihoods. With poverty affecting so many women and their families on a daily basis this in return acts to threaten the opportunities for

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conditions, Perspectives, and Recommendations

peace on a daily basis. Thus, in order for a sustainable peace process to be enacted, there needs to be more economic and livelihood opportunities for women, particularly in rural areas.

- Women entering government should be supported with training. In order to ensure that women can successfully bring their ideas into fruition, it is critical that they be supported by a “toolbox” for policy-making, so that they are aware of how to develop and design sound policies and be able to implement those policies to bring about transformative change.

- Opportunities are shrinking for women in public spaces in face of the withdrawal of the international community. Thus, while women have over the past 16 years developed the ability and passion to instigate positive change, now in the post-2014 period they no longer possess the same opportunities and outlets to apply those abilities. This can lead to disenfranchisement and an increased role for women in violent extremism. Therefore, focus should be placed on developing more public spaces in government institutions, private sector and within the civil society so women can have the opportunity to apply the education, expertise, and vision they have developed through the course of 16 years.

- Women do not see themselves as adequately represented. The women interviewed stated how they were aware of women’s participation in the peace building process, but they often viewed these women involved in the process as “window dressings.” They argued that these women’s positions are not substantiated, and instead they are merely there to satisfy the public and international community. Therefore, the selection criteria for appointing women to the HPC and Provincial Peace committees (PPCs)

should be based on quality rather than quantity and requires more transparency and emphasis on the candidate’s potential as a strong negotiator.

#### PAKISTAN

- Pakistan does not have a National Action Plan on Resolution 1325 whereas many other countries in the region including Afghanistan and Nepal have already announced their National Action Plans. It is time that Pakistan government comes out with an action plan regarding implementation of Resolution 1325. This, however, must be done with participation from women leaders across political divides.

- Pakistan’s National Action Plan (NAP) on fighting extremism also lacks any proposed measures, recommendations or plans which suggest a role for women leaders in either countering violent extremism or peacebuilding efforts including the rehabilitation of militancy-hit areas. There is a need for the Government to review the NAP and a good place to start would be by holding consultations on how the inclusion of women can benefit the NAP.

- In the Steering Committee on the National Action Plan, women’s representation is extremely low which in turn explains the lack of focus on women’s role in peacebuilding and the NAP. In order for the improvement on the status of women becoming part of peacebuilding processes, it might a good place to start by increasing the representation of women in the NAP Steering Committees which oversee implementation of NAP.

- There is need for inclusion of women in decision making positions, which currently

are extremely few in numbers including in political leadership, bureaucracy, military, police and judiciary. There is a need to allocate certain quotas so that they become part of policy making and decision making bodies and processes.

- The civil society should aim to bring about awareness as well as capacity building at the grassroots, focusing on the role of women as wives, daughters and sisters providing skills and information on early warning systems and also with skills to counter extremist narratives.

- There is a need to address the gendered way of thinking in Pakistan at the grassroots level starting from the education sector and curriculum reforms. Indeed, many curriculum studies have found that women are presented through stereotypical lenses and are often omitted altogether. These reforms must change the traditional way in which curriculum shapes views of the young minds, dictating a more domestic oriented role for women. Such reforms should be geared towards cultivating a new approach with story-telling about women leaders from the Pakistani history providing (a) women role models for the young generation and (b) re-shaping the views on social acceptability for women roles in leadership positions.

- In order to pave the way for increased role of women as peacebuilders, there is need to empower women through economic measures first. Economic and financial empowerment of women will need to precede involvement in peacebuilding leadership roles. To this end, it is important that programs by international organizations, non-governmental organizations as well as governments prioritize financial empowerment for women at the program level as well as at the policy level. ■

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### Afghanistan

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#### *HOMAYRA LUDIN ETEMADI*

Homayra Ludin Etemadi is currently an advisor to the former President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, H.E. Hamid Karzai, whom she served

as Deputy Chief of Staff for seven years. Prior to joining the President's office, Mrs. Etemadi was based in Geneva Switzerland where she pursued a career in the development and humanitarian fields. Working with the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Mrs. Etemadi negotiated and managed private sector partnerships in support of various disaster prevention and response programs of National Societies in Africa, Asia and Latin America. As Program Director for the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), Mrs. Etemadi oversaw the development and implementation of refugee and migrant assistance programs in both countries of asylum and resettlement.

Based in Geneva, Mrs. Etemadi became involved in significant international advocacy initiatives. She was a co-founder of the first NGO international coalition lobbying with governments and international organisations on refugee

women and children rights. As Chair of the International Working Group on Refugee Women, her honourable accomplishments included directing input on refugee women to the Beijing Platform of Action, convening the first international conference on Muslim Refugee Women, and serving as the co-ordinator of the refugee women's and Muslim women's caucuses at International Conference on the Status of Women, Beijing (1995.). Bringing women's voice to peace efforts was an important aspect of her work on behalf of refugee women.

Mrs. Etemadi's work on women's issues finds its roots in her work with the Afghan National Commission for UNESCO where she collaborated closely with the Afghan Women's Society, which today has been replaced by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Mrs. Etemadi holds BA and MA degrees from the University of Cambridge, England.



#### *NAHEED FARID*

Naheed Farid is the youngest member of the Afghan Parliament, where she serves as a member of the International Relations committee. Elected to Parliament in 2010 at the age of 27, Farid has worked tirelessly to engage Afghan youth and women in the nation's political process. She is also teaching at the American University of Afghanistan as a professor of International Relations and is a member of the Afghanistan Policy Group. Farid's background in non-profit work influenced her decision to enter politics and advocate for Afghanistan's women and children.

She served as Executive Director of the Mother and Child Organization of Afghanistan, and has worked for the World Food Program, Medica Mondiale

and Daccar. Farid has advocated for the reduction of gender-based violence and human rights violations against women, and expanded access to education and employment for women.

Farid is one of the most-educated members of the Afghan Parliament, and she uses her political position to elevate the voice of women in Afghanistan within her own country and on the international stage.





#### *LAILUMA NASIRI*

Lailuma Nasiri is currently heading the implementation of the USIP funded program on deradicalization of insurgent detainees with the aim to prevent violent recidivism understanding the drivers of radicalization to Violent Extremism (VE) and recidivism; de-radicalization through

training on the history, law, ethics and peace of Islam; and expected reduction in the rate of recidivism after release.

Ms. Nasiri has more than ten years of gender justice, human rights experience, working with national and international organizations. Currently, she is responsible for the overall management, implementation of projects and operation of Afghanistan Justice Organization (AJO), an Afghan NGO co-founded in 2011 with the aims to continue the international efforts on legal reform, capacity building, legal awareness, and to advance free markets and individual liberty through rule of law and an informed and competent citizenry.

Ms. Nasiri has a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration from Bircham International University/Spain. She has conducted, organized and/or presented in various seminars and conference including Women's Rights and Freedom in Afghanistan, Afghan Women Participation in Justice Sector, Role of

Afghan Women in Peace building, Human Rights, Youth & Elections and has been featured in several media outlets and prominent websites. Ms. Lailuma has drafted, edited and published several publications on Women Rights and Anti-Corruption.



#### *MARIAM SAFI*

Mariam Safi is one of the few female researchers and experts from Afghanistan

who has contributed widely to the field of post-conflict peace-building, rule of law, human security and countering-violent-extremism (CVE) offering a grassroots and gender perspective. Since becoming an active member of the think-tank community in Afghanistan in 2010, she has led six major research projects on these issues. She has authored over 50 articles on South Asian security, politics and economic matters.

Mariam is also a member of the Afghanistan Policy Group which is part of a network of think-tanks in the region that aims to develop a new working relationship between Afghanistan and the region by providing a strong platform for discussion on critical issues. Her contribution to the field was recognized by Diplomatic Courier which listed her

as one of the 100 Top Global Women in 2014. She is founding director of the Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DROPS), which is committed to strengthening democratic ideas and values in Afghanistan by conducting research that provides policymakers with sound alternative solutions to national issues and by raising awareness on women's issues and creating a role for women in policy dialogue. In the past Mariam has held many prestigious positions including Deputy Director of the Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies based in Kabul and co-founder of the Afghanistan Justice Organization's Strategic Studies Program. She holds an MA from the United Nations Mandated University for Peace and a BA in Political Science from York University.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### Pakistan

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#### *SAMEENA IMTIAZ*

Sameena Imtiaz is the Founder and Executive Director of the Peace Education and Development (PEAD) Foundation. An avid proponent of democratic development, human rights and peacebuilding Ms. Imtiaz has developed and implemented various programmes to lobby and advocate with parliamentarians, government officials, religious leaders and other stakeholders around these issues.

Ms. Imtiaz not only provides capacity building opportunities for all important stakeholders on the issues mentioned above but also helps different groups in the communities on how to organize themselves for discussions and engagement with women, politicians, religious figures, political activists, and the media to advocate for rights.

Ms. Imtiaz is an active member of Women's Democracy Network (WDN). With support from WDN, she has been instrumental in establishing the Pak-Afghan Women's Forum – a Track II women's initiative to build peace and democracy in the region. She is also a member of the Women Waging Peace Network. She currently is the National Coordinator of the "Peace Network Pakistan" (PNP) and "Coalition for the Rights of Minorities (CRM)" Pakistan. She is also a member of Amn-O-Nisa" (Women for Peace Coalition) besides serving on the working committee of the Women's Action Forum Pakistan.

She has to her credit several training manuals on human rights, civic education, leadership development, peace & conflict resolution, etc.



#### *SALMA MALIK*

Salma Malik is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad Pakistan. She specializes in the areas of War, Military Sociology, South Asian Affairs, Conflict Management & Transformation, Human Security, CBMs and Conventional Disarmament.

Her publications include a book titled Pakistan's Security Problem and Challenges in the Next Decade, RCSS Policy Studies titled Small Arms and the Security Debate in South Asia, USIP co-authored study on Mapping Conflict Trends in Pakistan, besides articles in research journals, book chapters and monthly columns.



### SHAZIA MARRI

Shazia Marri has been elected to the National Assembly on a general seat from Sindh province, making her one of 8 women directly elected to the Parliament in Pakistan. Ms. Marri is currently heading

the implementation of the USIP funded program on deradicalization of insurgent detainees with the aim to prevent violent recidivism understanding the drivers of radicalization to Violent Extremism (VE) and recidivism; de-radicalization through training on the history, law, ethics and peace of Islam; and expected reduction in the rate of recidivism after release.

She is presently a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms, as well as the Standing Committees on Commerce and Information Technology. Ms. Marri heads the Pakistan - Austria Parliamentary friendship group, and is a member of the Pakistan - Afghanistan Parliamentary friendship group.

Ms. Shazia Marri has previously served as a Provincial Minister for Information, Tourism and Electric Power of Sindh, as well as Advisor to the Sindh Government on Oil and Gas, during which she contributed significantly to the development of these sectors in Sindh.

In addition to other responsibilities, she also led Pakistan's delegation to the 53rd session of CSW at the United Nations.

Ms. Marri remained a member of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh in 2002 and in 2008. From 2003 to 2007, she hosted a TV programme on social issues among numerous other engagements. Ms. Marri also attended the BMZ conference on women empowerment within G7 framework, in Berlin November 2015, at the invitation of the Heinrich Boell Stiftung, as part of a visit that included meetings with Afghan and German counterparts. Ms. Marri is also a member of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Regional Security Group organized by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS).



### MEHR TAJ ROGHANI

Mehr Taj Roghani is the Deputy Speaker, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly. She has the honour to be the first female elected as Deputy Speaker in the KP assembly in December 2015. She earlier served as the Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education and Women Empowerment in the KP assembly.

Dr. Mehertaj is also currently working as Member Management Committee Red Crescent Society, Member Executive Committee Pakistan Pediatric Association Center and Member board of directors KICH. She has to her credit over 30 years of teaching experience to Medical Students and other health related workers.

## ABOUT THE PARTNERS

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### *ORGANIZATION FOR POLICY RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT STUDIES*

The Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DROPS) is a Afghanistan based organization that is committed to strengthening democratic ideas and values by producing research that can provide policymakers with sound alternative solutions to national issues. As an interdisciplinary and independent research-oriented non-governmental organization, DROPS' goal is to facilitate and encourage Afghanistan's transition to democratic governance by aiming to (1) produce policy-relevant research that provides information and makes available resources to decision-makers at the national and subnational levels; and (2) increase women's involvement in policy dialogue and research on a diversity of issues that are at play in building democratic governance. Both objectives intend on plugging the gaps to help Afghanistan prosper as it transitions into the 'Decade of Transformation' (2015- 2024). For more information visit: [www.dropsafghanistan.org](http://www.dropsafghanistan.org).



### *PEACE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION*

The Peace Education And Development (PEAD) Foundation is a non-profit training and advocacy organization, which has been engaged in de-radicalization and counter-extremism efforts in Pakistan since 2002, with a special focus on the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). With support and help from international donors, PEAD has managed to conduct multiple programs in these areas which have helped spread critical awareness regarding non-violence, effects of radicalization, religious and social harmony, human rights and good governance. PEAD has collaborated with local groups, government organizations, social action groups, students and teachers' to combat the menace of extremism. For more information visit: [www.pead.org.pk](http://www.pead.org.pk)

# PRAISE

"Women are the key to peace. I am proud to support this important initiative that brings Afghan and Pakistani women leaders together. Their voices and unique perspectives are critical elements in the process of forging a just and lasting peace for all citizens in their respective countries."

Anita McBride, Women's Democracy Network Advisory Council, Member,  
U.S. Afghan Women's Council, and Former Chief of Staff to First Lady Laura Bush



"This policy brief provided an important opportunity for Afghan and Pakistani women in politics, civil society and academia to identify tangible strategies that they believe would help to achieve peace in the region. I hope this document will be utilized as a tool to craft solutions."

Mark Green, President, International Republican Institute, Former U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania



"I celebrate this much needed initiative for women of Afghanistan and Pakistan oriented to empower women as actors of the peace and security agenda. Based on my expertise as a woman peace negotiator and leader of a regional women organization that addresses similar concerns I am confident this initiative will be a significant contribution to peacebuilding efforts in that region."

Edita Tahiri, Minister for Dialogue, Government of the Republic of Kosovo

## WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN WOMEN'S POLICY BRIEF

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