



# GENDER ANALYSIS OF AGREEMENT FOR BRINGING PEACE TO AFGHANISTAN 2020

## WHAT WE KNOW

1. *With no women's participation in the elite peace process – even with some women's participation in civil society and political institutions – the likelihood of women's rights being included in a comprehensive peace agreement in Afghanistan is substantially reduced – specifically, it is 40 per cent less likely.*
2. *Advancing gender equality and women's rights after conflict is significantly more difficult in the aftermath of a gender-blind peace process (where women have not participated or gender equality issues considered).*
3. *Gender-inclusive processes must be a part of all post-conflict institutions and decision-making in order to achieve sustainable peace.*
4. *Time does not increase the likelihood that gender provisions in peace agreements will be adopted and implemented. Early support must be given to implement gender provisions alongside the core provisions of the peace agreement.*
5. *It is possible to pursue inclusive processes even within fragile elite talks. There are different elite and non-elite entry points that can facilitate inclusion and influence a gender perspective.<sup>1</sup>*
6. *Delaying the implementation of gender provisions is harmful. Delayed prioritisation and implementation increase the risk that peace will fail.<sup>2</sup>*

## WHAT WE HAVE FOUND

*We predict a substantial decline in the likelihood that women's rights are included in a comprehensive peace agreement in Afghanistan if there is no opportunity for women to participate in elite dialogues as part of negotiating parties and mediating teams. This, in turn, will further erode women and girls' current levels of safety and inclusion.*

There have been significant gains in Afghanistan since 2006 in particular with three times more women enrolled in tertiary education, a reduction in the fertility rate from 6.64 to 4.6 children per adult female enabling better outcomes for girl's education and economic participation.

However, the decline of women's civil society participation between 2012 and 2019 as a result of the worsening security situation has made it even more difficult to secure women's rights and participation in the current Afghan peace process. For example, the Taliban has targeted women civilians and politically-active women, violence against women and girls is widespread and systematic, including killings, with the home the most in-

secure place.<sup>3</sup> This means special measures need to be taken now by the United States and its allies to ensure women are at the table.

Our findings are based on a statistical model consisting of 110 agreements and 55 countries together with current data on women's status in Afghanistan and other factors shaping peace agreement outcomes over the period 2000-2016.<sup>4</sup>

Despite recent gains in gender equality in Afghanistan, we find that intra-Afghan talks that do not involve women *are 40 per cent less likely to result in a comprehensive agreement that includes provisions that ensure the full protection for all women's rights including their political rights.*

The Government of Afghanistan has stated that they will not accept a peace agreement that does not uphold international minimum standards of women's human rights, *therefore if the Taliban do not consent to women's participation in talks, and the US does not insist on women's participation, there is a significant risk of return to civil war.*

## WHAT WE SHOULD DO

1. Identify and promote internationally-recognised minimum standards guaranteeing women's human rights in intra-Afghan talks, consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2513 (2020) on March 10th that "any political settlement must protect the rights of all Afghans, including women, youth and minorities."
2. Support the inclusion of Afghan women's and youth civil society participation in intra-Afghan talks with the Taliban. Invite delegates to informal talks so that they can be kept informed of developments in real time and communicate their concerns and perspectives to the delegations.
3. Australia should use its international influence to ensure the inclusion of women and gender training in the mediation and support teams.
4. Discourage agreements based on vague assertions that women's rights will be respected 'according to Islamic principles'; this may provide a platform for the degradation of women's and girls' rights.
5. Identify implementation targets from the 2015 Afghan National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.
6. Preserve the gains for Afghan women at this critical time through Australia's influence vis a vis the multi-lateral trust funds (quota targets for funds to women's programs across all aid sectors), and as a NATO observer.
7. Support (alternate) spaces to encourage women's participation in conflict transitions, especially through social media and technology and with travel funding and capacity-building. Identify specific pathways for influencing elite processes, especially civil society initiatives.
8. Prepare to deploy in-country rescue visas if women leaders are threatened especially female parliamentarians, leaders of girls' schools and women's refugees.
9. Appeal to Afghan-Australian "Australia Awards"

alumni to insist that women be involved in the peace process, and that their rights are protected and build the long-term capacity of Afghanistan's civil society and government sector on gender equality through dedicated postgraduate education scholarships for gender-inclusive research.

10. Facilitate Australia-Afghanistan dialogues and exchange to promote ideas and practices of women's rights, non-violence and peace.
11. Support the cooperation of *Afghans for Progressive Thinking* students from 36 clubs and *Monash International Affairs Society* students to further debate on women and gender equality issues in the peace process.

---

## REFERENCES

- 1 Jacqui True, "Gender and Conflict: Making Elite Bargaining Processes More Inclusive" United Kingdom Stabilisation Unit, 23 January, 2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/2VZB7Jv>
- 2 Katrina Lee Koo, Sara E. Davies, Jacqui True and Nicole George, "Towards Inclusive Peace: Mapping Gender Provisions in Peace Agreements: Workshop Report" Monash GPS, 30 October, 2019, available at: <https://bit.ly/3eMIDxe> and the Towards Inclusive Peace project website: <http://mappingpeace.monashgps.org/>
- 3 Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Summary of the Report on Violence against Women: The Causes, Contexts and Situation of Violence against Women in Afghanistan (Kabul: AIRHC), [www.aihrc.org.af/media/files/Research%20Reports/Summary%20report-VAW-.pdf](http://www.aihrc.org.af/media/files/Research%20Reports/Summary%20report-VAW-.pdf).
- 4 J. True and Y. Morales-Riveros. 2019. "Toward Inclusive Peace: Analysing Gender-Sensitive Peace Agreements 2000-2016." *International Political Science Review* 40, 1: 1-18.

Open source data available at [https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/Toward\\_Inclusive\\_Peace\\_Mapping\\_Gender\\_Provisions\\_of\\_Peace\\_Agreements/6948869](https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/Toward_Inclusive_Peace_Mapping_Gender_Provisions_of_Peace_Agreements/6948869)

Monash Gender, Peace & Security (GPS) Centre's vision is to provide research evidence to support the integration of gender perspectives in peace and security policies in Australia, the Asia-Pacific region and globally.

[monash.edu/arts/gender-peace-security](https://monash.edu/arts/gender-peace-security)