Fragility and Making Peace: Rights of Afghan Women and Peace with the Taliban

May 2019

Research Report
Acknowledgments
This research report is part of the project, NAP 1325 Monitor, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). APPRO wishes to express its sincere gratitude to all those who agreed to be engaged in data collection for this report.

About NAP 1325 Monitor
The specific objectives of NAP 1325 Monitor are to:
1. Monitor changes in conditions for implementing Afghanistan’s NAP 1325, using a standardized methodology based on a comprehensive set of indicators developed from the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), subsequent related resolutions, and Afghanistan’s NAP 1325.
2. Generate practical policy recommendations for interventions by civil society and the government on meeting WPS objectives as specified in UNSCR 1325 and Afghanistan’s NAP 1325.
3. Disseminate information from the monitoring and related thematic research to national and international audiences with a focus on the WPS agenda in Afghanistan.

About APPRO
Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO) is an independent social research organization with a mandate to promote social and policy learning to benefit development and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and other less developed countries through conducting applied research and monitoring, evaluations, and training and mentoring. APPRO is registered with the Ministry of Economy in Afghanistan as a non-profit, non-government organization, headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan with offices in Mazar-e Sharif (north), Herat (west), Kandahar (south), Jalalabad (east), and Bamyan (center). APPRO is the founding member of APPRO-Europe, registered in Belgium, acts as the Secretariat for the National Advocacy Committee for Public Policy (NAC-PP), and is the founder of Center for Good Governance, Gender Analysis, Applied Social Research, Public Administration, and Development (GRAD). For more information on APPRO, see: www.appro.org.af. For more information on APPRO-Europe, see: www.appro-europe.net. For more information on NAC-PP, see: www.nac-pp.net. For more information on GRAD, see: www.grad.edu.af

Contact: mail@appro.org.af

Researchers

Cover Page Photo: Oriane Zerah

APPRO takes full responsibility for all omissions and errors.

© 2019. Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization. Some rights reserved. This publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted only for non-commercial purposes and with written credit to APPRO and links to APPRO’s website at www.appro.org.af. Any other use of this publication requires prior written permission, which may be obtained by writing to: mail@appro.org.af
# Table of Contents

**INTRODUCTION** ................................................................................................................................. 5  
**OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE** .......................................................................................... 12  
  - Risk Mitigation ..................................................................................................................................... 14  
  - Limitations ........................................................................................................................................... 14  
**FINDINGS** ............................................................................................................................................. 14  
  - Government Efforts and the Peace Process ......................................................................................... 14  
  - Women’s Role in the Peace Process ..................................................................................................... 17  
  - Peace and Reconciliation ..................................................................................................................... 17  
    - Inclusion of Taliban in Civil Service ............................................................................................... 18  
    - Recruitment of Taliban in Security Forces ..................................................................................... 20  
    - Releasing Taliban Prisoners ............................................................................................................ 23  
    - Amnesty for Taliban ......................................................................................................................... 25  
  - Revisions to the Constitution ............................................................................................................. 27  
  - Amendments to Women-centered Laws ............................................................................................. 30  
  - Consequences of Peace ....................................................................................................................... 32  
    - Security Conditions After Peace ................................................................................................... 32  
    - Peace and Women in Civil Service .................................................................................................. 35  
    - Peace and Participation of Women in Elections ............................................................................. 37  
    - Peace and Women’s Access to Formal Justice ................................................................................ 39  
    - Peace and Women’s Mobility .......................................................................................................... 41  
    - Peace and Women’s Access to Education ....................................................................................... 43  
    - Peace and Women’s Access to Shelters .......................................................................................... 46  
**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS** ...................................................................................................................... 49  
  - Government Efforts and the Peace Process ......................................................................................... 49  
  - Women’s Role in the Peace Process ..................................................................................................... 49  
  - Inclusion of Taliban in Civil Service ................................................................................................... 49  
  - Recruitment of Taliban in Security Forces .......................................................................................... 49  
  - Releasing Taliban Prisoners ................................................................................................................ 50  
  - Amnesty for Taliban ............................................................................................................................ 50  
  - Revisions to the Constitution ............................................................................................................. 51  
  - Amendments to Women-centered Laws ............................................................................................. 51  
  - Security Conditions After Peace ........................................................................................................ 52  
  - Peace and Women in Civil Service ...................................................................................................... 52  
  - Peace and Participation of Women in Elections .................................................................................. 52  
  - Peace and Women’s Access to Formal Justice .................................................................................... 53  
  - Peace and Women’s Mobility ............................................................................................................... 53  
  - Peace and Women’s Access to Education ............................................................................................ 53  
  - Peace and Women’s Access to Shelters ............................................................................................... 54  
**CONCLUSION** ......................................................................................................................................... 54  
**WAYS FORWARD** .................................................................................................................................. 56
Introduction

Since 2010, the Government of Afghanistan has made several unsuccessful attempts to make peace with the Taliban to end the conflict. Until very recently, these initiatives were unheeded by the Taliban who have consistently refused talks with the Afghan government and have instead insisted on having direct peace talks with the United States as the occupying force in the country.

Ex-president Hamid Karzai offered the Taliban a peace deal to be negotiated through a Grand Peace Jirga in 2010, followed by a Loya Jirga in 2011. The offer included a reintegration plan which promised an honorable place for the Taliban in society on the condition that the Taliban renounced violence and their ties with al-Qaeda. A reconciliation plan was also offered to ensure amnesty and political recognition for the Taliban leadership and assistance in removing their leaders’ names from the terrorists’ blacklist.1 President Karzai’s offer of peace was rejected by the Taliban. Subsequently the Taliban assassinated Burhan Uddin Rabbani, the head of the High Peace Council a few weeks before the Loya Jirga in 2011.

Peace negotiations between the Afghan government under President Karzai and the Taliban were conducted mainly through the intermediaries of both parties outside the country. Despite some progress, the Karzai government’s peace building efforts failed due to a lack of cohesive strategy, poor coordination between the Afghan government and international actors, and the absence of transparency in the process.2

Attaining peace has been a priority of the National Unity Government (NUG) since its formation in 2014. President Ghani approached the regional countries, particularly Pakistan, to help Afghanistan in its efforts toward peace. He also made efforts to convince the international community that a peace process led and administered by Afghans could be successful. The Kabul process aiming to build a regional and international consensus on an “Afghan led, Afghan owned” peace process was launched in June 2017. During the first Kabul Conference, President Ghani outlined his efforts to convince Pakistan to cooperate with his government in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table, and stated that Pakistan had rejected to cooperate and that it was unclear what Pakistan wanted from Afghanistan.3

The second round of the Kabul Peace Process was organized on 28 February 2018. In this round, President Ashraf Ghani offered the Taliban peace talks without preconditions. The proposal included amnesty for Taliban fighters, recognition of the Taliban as a political party, amendment of the Constitution, and lifting sanctions on Taliban leaders.4 The Taliban, however, did not accept this offer, stating that they would start their spring offensive a month later in April.

---

2 Ibid.
In the meantime, on March 26, 2018, a sit-in for peace was initiated by a group of citizens in Lashkargah, Helmand province, in response to a suicide attack on a crowd leaving a wrestling event at the stadium two days prior, killing and injuring tens of civilians. The start of the peace march from Helmand to Kabul and the three-day ceasefire in June 2018 are seen by many as strong indications of openness on both sides of the conflict to a dialogue on peace.

In June 2018, President Ghani announced a one-week unilateral ceasefire against the Taliban during Eid-ul Fitr. According to the ceasefire, the Afghan National Security and Defense Forces would stop all offensive operations against the Taliban around the country. The Taliban responded with an offering of a three-day ceasefire during Eid days, June 16-18, declaring that after the three-day ceasefire, they would resume their armed insurgency. Despite this declaration, President Ghani announced a further unilateral ceasefire ahead of Eid-ul Adha in August 2018. This time the Taliban rejected the offer and attacked the Presidential Palace with rocket propelled grenades and launched a military offensive on Ghazni city which took the lives of hundreds of civilian and national security personnel.

During the June 16-18 ceasefire, large numbers of Taliban fighters entered major cities of Afghanistan, to be greeted by civilians, some politicians, and the police and army personnel. The ceasefire, and the low-key but significant public response to the multi-sited peace movement that began in late March 2018, have provided new hope for peace and opportunities for multi-stakeholder dialogue on what a negotiated peace with the Taliban should entail.

At the Geneva Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan in November 2018, President Ghani presented his roadmap for reaching peace with the Taliban. He introduced a 12-member negotiating team, consisting of men and women, led by Abdul Salam Rahimi, his Chief of Staff. The President added that his government had the potential and capacity to pursue peace negotiations and that Afghanistan had entered a new chapter in the peace process. The President offered an unconditional peace negotiation, but he drew redlines for a peace settlement. Respecting the Afghan Constitution and women’s rights as well as preventing interference of foreign terrorist and criminal groups in internal affairs of the country were specified as the redlines for the Government of Afghanistan in the proposed negotiations.

Also in November 2018, Russia hosted an unprecedented peace talk between a Taliban delegation and the member of the High Peace Council, a non-government body responsible for overseeing peace efforts in Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan did not have an official delegation at this event but delegates of more than 10 countries including China, Pakistan, India, Iran, and Central Asian states were present. The Afghan delegation reiterated the offer of peace talks without pre-condition while the

---


Taliban reaffirmed that they would only talk about peace with the United States. The Taliban also reiterated their position regarding the full withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and the reform of the Afghan Constitution based on Islamic Sharia Law.⁹

The second round of talks in Moscow between Afghan political figures and the Taliban delegation took place in February 2019. The outcome of this two-day event was the agreement for a roadmap for ending the conflict. The first step in this roadmap consists of a full withdrawal of foreign troops and the Taliban’s commitment to respect the fundamental rights of Afghans. Both sides described the talks as “very satisfactory” and “very successful”.¹⁰ Both parties agreed on a nine-point statement which emphasizes the need to reach a peace deal, continued for “intra-Afghan” dialogue – despite the fact that the Government of Afghanistan was not included in these talks, direct talks between the United States and the Taliban, systematic reform in national institutions, inclusion of regional countries in the process, complete withdrawal of foreign forces, assurance that Afghanistan’s territory will not be used against any other country, protection of women’s rights as per Islamic provisions, protection of freedom of speech as per Islamic provision, attracting development aid for Afghanistan’s reconstruction, removal of Taliban leaders from the United Nations’ blacklist, opening a Taliban office in Qatar, and holding the next intra-Afghan talks in Doha, Qatar.¹¹

There are concerns about the latest rounds of peace negotiations, including the fact that the group meeting with the Taliban is comprised mainly of former Mujahedin, dissidents opposing the Government of Afghanistan, and a group of Moscow-based Afghans – none of whom has expressed any desire to include the Government of Afghanistan in the negotiation process. Not having a mandate from the Government of Afghanistan, which is elected and charged with the responsibility for the Constitution, the group holding peace talks with the Taliban is viewed with suspicion and as lacking legitimacy. There are also worries that the group is unaccountable for the compromises it is likely to make with the Taliban. For many observers, compromises with the Taliban on the rights of women, youth, and minorities are likely to counter constitutional rights and provisions.

A recurrent demand of civil society has been the “meaningful participation” of women in peace negotiations.¹² In April 2019, the inclusion of government representatives in the peace talk in Doha, albeit in their private capacities, has been perceived as a small but positive step toward more guarantees to upholding rights the Government of Afghanistan has committed to uphold. This was accompanied with the inclusion of civil society representatives and women in discussions. However, the women remain excluded from the high level peace negotiations, raising concern about the extent to

---


Thus far, the Taliban representatives have stated that in a post peace government that includes the Taliban, they would ensure women's access to basic rights in accordance with Islamic provisions. At the same time, a spokesman of the Taliban has stated that "under the name of women rights, there has been work for immorality, indecency, and circulation of non-Islamic culture".\footnote{Farmer, B. (2019, February 5). “Taliban say women's rights to be protected under Islam, but must not threaten Afghan values.” Retrieved March 3, 2019, from The Telegraph: \url{https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/02/05/taliban-say-womens-rights-protected-islam-must-not-threaten/}} The gains in fundamental rights and liberties of the past 17 years have been barely mentioned by the non-Taliban participants in the peace talks while most have agreed to adherence to (unspecified) Islamic values. Only two women participated in the Moscow talks while there is no representation of women in the subsequent Qatar talks.\footnote{See: Afghanistan Times (2019, February 19). “Women fear ignorance of their roles in peace talks.” Retrieved March 3, 2019, from \url{http://www.afghanistantimes.af/women-of-the-pas-t tense-peace-talks/} and TOLO news (2019, February 25). “US, Taliban Officials Meet In Qatar; Talks To Begin Tuesday.” Retrieved March 3, 2019, from \url{https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/us-taliban-officials-meet-qatar-talks-begin-tuesday}} The discontent about the exclusion of women and failure to address their rights during the peace talks is not limited to Kabul or major cities. For example, a number of women from the rural province of Ghor have also expressed worries that their freedom might be compromised in these talks.\footnote{Pajhwok. (2019, February 27). “Peace talks: Ghor women fear retreat on their rights.” Retrieved March 3, 2019, from Pajhwok Afghan NEWS: \url{https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2019/02/27/peace-talks-ghor-women-fear-retreat-their-rights}} Regardless of the concerns about the terms of a negotiated peace with the Taliban in segments of the population, particularly among women, youth, and ethnic and religious minorities and the rumors about a new constitution more in line with sharia as one of the key demands of the Taliban, there remains a charged wave of optimism about peace.

Russia and subsequently met with President Ashraf Ghani, Afghan political figures, and some civil society representatives to hear their opinions, priorities and concerns regarding a peace settlement.19

As a goodwill gesture in support of peace efforts in Afghanistan, Pakistan released an influential Taliban leader, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a co-founder of the movement, so he could take part in peace negotiations with U.S. officials.20 The release of Mullah Baradar was welcomed by most Afghans, including Ex-president Hamid Karzai, as a positive step toward peace and reconciliation efforts in the country.21

At the fourth round of talks between the United States and the Taliban in Qatar, Khalilzad expressed the urgency to end the tragedy in Afghanistan.22 According to the framework that has emerged from the peace talks, in the event of a negotiated peace, the Taliban would ensure that Afghanistan would not be used as a safe haven for terrorists or become a base for terrorists to launch attacks against the U.S. or its allies. In return, the United States would fully withdraw all its troops from Afghanistan. The framework is also said to have provisions for “enforcement mechanisms” though no details are available on how these mechanisms will work or who will enforce them.23 According to Khalilzad, the Taliban will ultimately agree to a ceasefire and direct talks with the Afghan government, a claim that has been denied by the Taliban.24

In a bid to include the Taliban in the upcoming Presidential Elections, the idea of pushing back the elections was reportedly brought up by Khalilzad.25 Later, he stated that holding or postponing the elections was for Afghans to decide.26 At the time of writing (March 2019), the Independent Electoral Commission maintains that the Presidential Election will be held in July 2019, as planned.

Khalilzad has stated that efforts by the United States center on securing assurances from the Taliban that Afghanistan will not be used as safe haven for terrorists and that human rights, freedom of the press, and women’s rights will be respected and protected under any power sharing agreement.

between the Taliban and the Afghan government. These efforts have been likened to the Paris peace talks during the Vietnam War which, in retrospect, is seen as a surrender by the U.S. to the armed opposition. Once in power, and regardless of any conditions set by the United States, the Taliban will be unconstrained and would be free to choose any method for governing. In a public appearance, President Ghani warned that a peace deal that excluded the Afghan government would end in disaster and bloodshed.  

In major cities across the country, women make up over 30 percent of the students, over 25 percent of parliament seats, and around 20 percent of the workforce. All of these gains for women are provisioned in the Constitution but are tenuous. Revising the Constitution to restrict the presence and mobility of women outside the home can be enforced with brute force and without much resistance, akin to the sudden restrictions imposed on women under Mujahedeen’s rule. For many women, “the price of peace cannot be limitless”.  

In February 2019, at the “Grand Conference of Afghan Women’s National Consensus on Peace” was organized by women in Kabul where 3,500 women participated from across the country. In his speech to the audience, President Ghani rejected any possibility of women’s rights being used as bargaining chips in peace negotiations. The Conference concluded with a declaration calling for an end to the conflict, respecting the Afghan Constitution and acknowledging women’s role in the peace process.

A statement by Afghan Women’s Network (AWN) on the Doha peace talks calls for ending the war through peaceful means, inclusion of women in peace negotiations, and recognition and respecting the rights of women. The statement also calls for trust building measures by the Taliban, such as reopening girls’ schools, stopping attacks on women’s NGOs, and protecting doctors, nurses and journalists in the areas controlled by the Taliban.

In response to an op-ed in the New York Times by two Afghan women who objected to statements on women’s rights being defined “as an intra-Afghan matter”, in a February 2019 article in the National Interest Magazine, Khalilzad’s wife, Cheryl Benard, called on Afghan feminists to take charge of their own destiny after almost two decades of support mainly from the United States, arguing:

---

27 Ibid.
28 For this line of reasoning, see, for example, Crocker, R. (2019, January 29). “I was ambassador to Afghanistan. This deal is a surrender.” Retrieved March 3, 2019, from The Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/i-was-ambassador-to-afghanistan-this-deal-is-a-surrender/2019/01/29/8700ed68-2409-11e9-ad53-824486280311_story.html?utm_term=.b35a73ec38e4
Now it was natural, when we saw the dismal circumstances under which Afghan women were suffering when first we came to their country after 9/11, to want to help them. And hopefully, our massive and expensive efforts on their behalf will make their task easier. But the direction some of them seem to be taking in the face of our intended drawdown is worrying me. Emancipation and equality aren’t the product of pity or guilt, and you aren’t owed them by someone else’s army or taxpayer dollars. Seventeen years, 2,500 dead Americans and $126 billion are enough. More is not only unjustified but wouldn’t achieve the desired outcome anyway.

Benard continues that it is now up to Afghan women to struggle and persevere to win their rights, acknowledging that it could take hundreds of years to attain those rights given the “deep-seated cultural values and traditions.” Although these views sparked a backlash on the Social Media, it seems that Afghans, truly, have no other option but to stand for themselves if a peace deal is negotiated without their say and without specific provisions to protect women’s rights.

Others hold that Afghan women fending for themselves does not relieve the west of its historical responsibility toward Afghan women. Afghan women came out of hiding in droves after the fall of the Taliban in late 2001. And they stayed out and made themselves present in all aspects of social life, due in no small part to women-centered programming by, and protection of, international donors including the establishment of quotas for women in politics and civil service. These gains are, nevertheless, largely protectable as long as there is a tangible presence in Afghanistan by the west. With a rushed disengagement with Afghanistan by the west, many of these tenuous gains for women would run a high risk of being rolled back. Counter to Benard’s position, others have recognized the west’s moral obligation to the women of Afghanistan and, indeed, elsewhere:

After nearly two decades of war, the United States has a moral obligation to ensure that women in Afghanistan are not returned to the horrors of the 1990s – if and when we leave. But, we must also ensure that they are treated much better than they are in countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Bahrain, and other nations like Pakistan and Indonesia with whom we have close diplomatic and security relationships. The United States should be leading efforts to press leaders in those countries to treat women equally to their male counterparts... ... The United States should be prepared to support and defend the rights of Afghan women – and Afghans more broadly – even as it considers drawing down U.S. troops.

While there is recognition that peace negotiations often require a degree of confidentiality, there is concern that a peace negotiated without a representative inclusion of all stakeholders, particularly women, may not be sustainable in the longer-term. Informed peace making requires understanding and appreciation of what different segments of Afghan society think of a negotiated peace with the Taliban, how they envisage it, and what they are willing to give up to attain it.

Further, in light of Afghanistan’s adoption of a National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), driven mostly by international donors and embraced by the National Unity Government, civil society and women’s rights organizations, it is crucial to address the degree to which a peace settlement with the Taliban is compatible with the provisions of Afghanistan’s NAP 1325. It is equally crucially important that a peace settlement adheres

---

33 Benard, C. (2019, February 27). “Afghan Women are In Charge of Their Own Fate.” Retrieved March 5, 2019, from The National Interest: https://nationalinterest.org/feature/afghan-women-are-charge-their-own-fate-457777?fbclid=IwAR1z9B0cn5ui88q8qJDa9C2JUxVn5cVucyKMK6xlanlv41qSp4JqTOH8&page=0%2C1
to the provisions in the Constitution, various laws, and the many policies and structures put in place by successive Afghan governments since 2001, albeit mostly under pressure from international donors, to address gender inequality.

Many women and men who take gender equality seriously and want more rights for women in Afghanistan have been given legitimacy for their demands by the provisions of NAP 1325, particularly under Strategic Objective 1 on “Enhancing women’s meaningful participation in the reconciliation, negotiation, and reintegration at all levels.”

Given this background and the many uncertainties that remain about the consequences of peace, particularly for women, youth, and ethnic and religious minorities, this research was undertaken to gain an understanding and appreciation of what different segments of society think of a negotiated peace with the Taliban, how they envisage it and their concerns and worries about it, and what they are willing to give up to attain it. This survey was carried to answer these questions and, based on the answers, to explore pathways toward sustainable peace in Afghanistan.

**Objectives, Methodology and Scope**

A key underlying assumption for this research is that a negotiated peace with the Taliban is more likely now that it has ever been since their fall from power in late 2001. This increased likelihood is due mostly to the fact that the United States, as the main military force in Afghanistan, has expressed its explicit wish to withdraw its troops. This change in policy by the United States is coupled with widespread weariness of Afghans with the protracted conflict and living in a constant state of siege.

This research was designed in October 2018, in response to the change in policy by the United States and the subsequent dialogue among ordinary Afghans about peace. The first round of data collection and analysis was completed by the end of November 2018, coinciding with Zalmay Khalilzad’s trips to Afghanistan’s neighboring countries to initiate peace talks with the Taliban. Given the intensified efforts to hold peace talks with the Taliban and explicit worries expressed by different segments of the population, particularly women but also youth and minorities, it was decided to conduct a second round of data collection in February 2019, focusing on people’s views on the consequences of a negotiated peace with the Taliban.

Both rounds of data collection aimed to gain an understanding of how ordinary Afghans felt about a peace deal with the Taliban and what they expected as consequences of peace. The research was designed within the framework of Afghanistan’s National Action Plan (NAP 1325) for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, to examine the degree to which a peace settlement with the Taliban is compatible with the provisions of Afghanistan’s NAP 1325. Relatedly, the research sought to examine views and expectations of Afghans on whether and how a peace settlement adheres to provisions in the Constitution, various laws, and the many policies and structures put in place by successive Afghan governments since 2001 to protect and promote women’s equal rights.

A survey was conducted in six provinces (18 districts) of Afghanistan. The sites for the survey were Kabul, Balkh, Kandahar, Herat, Nangarhar, and Bamyan, covering the central, northern, southern, eastern and western parts of the country. These six provinces represent a significant degree of
heterogeneity in the social, political, economic, and security situations. The provinces were also selected for relative ease of access, since APPRO has regional offices in all 5 provinces (Table 1).

### Table 1: Breakdown of Provinces and Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>Mazar-e-Sharif, Khulm, Balkh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamyan</td>
<td>Bamyan Center, Shibar, Yakawlang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herat</td>
<td>Herat Center, Karukh, Ghorian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>Kabul Center, Istalif, Khak Jabbar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td>Kandahar Center, Arghandab, Daman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nangarhar</td>
<td>Jalalabad, Kama, Surkhod</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

144 rural and urban sampling points were selected to complete the survey questionnaire. The sample size for each province was calculated to obtain 5% margin of error at 95% confidence interval.

The responses were analyzed across variables of sex, location (urban/rural) and age. The urban/rural categorization encompasses residents in the provincial capital for urban dwellers, and in districts of the province for rural dwellers. Respondents were divided into three age categories: aged 18 to 25 to capture those who were young children in 2001 when the Taliban were overthrown, aged 26 to 40 to capture those who were older children or young adults in 2001, and above 40 years of age to capture those who had fully experienced the Taliban rule as adults.

Two rounds of data collection were conducted. A first round was carried out in October 2018, as there were increasing indications of the possibility of peace talks with the Taliban in the aftermath of the Eid ceasefire of June 2018. Questions in the first round of data collection focused primarily on the role of the government in the peace process, women’s role in the peace process, and the conditions citizens were willing to accept for reconciliation. With heightened activity surrounding peace negotiations as of November 2018, a second round of data collection was conducted in February 2019 to assess what expectations of citizens were for women’s rights if a peace deal with the Taliban were to take place, focusing on indicators in relation to NAP 1325. Data collection for the two rounds was conducted in the same locations, with respondents from same age groups and with similar socio-economic profiles. Table 2 below provides an overview of the profiles of respondents for each round by sex, location and age.

### Table 2: Profile of Respondents (Sex, Location, Age)

#### Round 1 (October 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-40</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1138</td>
<td>1118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-40</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1138</td>
<td>1118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Risk mitigation**

To avoid risks of fraudulent data, data collected was checked on a daily basis by a survey coordinator at the provincial level and reporting to the central office in Kabul on a daily basis. All data sets were cross-checked for quality at the central office.

**Limitations**

Due to unavailability of reliable lists of households at the sampling point level from the Central Statistics Organization (CSO), a Systematic Random Sampling (SRS) was used to randomly select the households at each sampling point. A starting point, such as a mosque, a health center, a school or a bazaar was selected as a sampling point in each of the urban and rural sampling sites.

**Findings**

Findings are presented by indicator, each related to a question in the survey. Under each indicator, responses from the aggregated data from six provinces are presented in relation to categories of sex, age group, and location (urban/rural). Provincial level analysis is presented for each indicator disaggregated by sex. A five-point scale was used to collect the data. For the sake of clarity, however, the results are primarily presented on a three-point scale, outlining notable variations between the scales in the narrative.

**Government Efforts and the Peace Process**

Respondents were asked about their views on the efforts of the Afghan government in establishing the conditions for a peace agreement with the Taliban, and the extent to which they expected these efforts would materialize and lead to a peace agreement. The questions were asked during the first survey round in October 2018 and before the announcement by the United States Government to have direct talks with the Taliban in Doha in November 2018.
Regardless of sex and age, people are generally unconvinced of the effectiveness of government efforts in establishing the conditions for a peace agreement with the Taliban, just under 60 percent for both men and women (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Effectiveness of Government Efforts on Peace – By Sex**

![Bar chart showing effectiveness by sex](chart1)

n=2295

Women in urban areas are more skeptical than men about the government’s effectiveness in moving toward peace. The views of men in urban and rural areas are almost identical (Figure 2). Overall, a majority of males and females are skeptical of government efforts regarding peace and, with the exception of Bamyan, in all cases women are less satisfied with government efforts than men.

**Figure 2: Effectiveness of Government Efforts on Peace – By Location**

![Bar chart showing effectiveness by location](chart2)

n=1274  

n=1021
Male and female views on the effectiveness of efforts by the government converge at the provincial level (Figures 3 and 4), with the exception of Herat where a large majority of women (73 percent) believe the efforts of the government have been ineffective (Figure 3), versus men at 48 percent (Figure 4).

**Figure 3: Effectiveness of Government Efforts – Women, by Province**

Another significant exception to convergent views between men and women is Bamyan, where men are significantly more dissatisfied with government peace efforts, 88 percent (Figure 4), than women, 66 percent (Figure 3). Also of note is the percentage of respondents who have no opinion either way in Kandahar, 12 percent of both men and women, and Balkh, 16 percent of men.

**Figure 4: Effectiveness of Government Efforts – Men, By Province**

n=1140

n=1155
Women’s Role in the Peace Process

Women’s participation in the peace process is one of the main areas of focus of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, and of Afghanistan’s National Action Plan (NAP) 1325. The government of Afghanistan has committed to increase participation of women in all matters related to the peace process.

Figure 5: Importance of Women’s Involvement in the Peace Process – By Sex

While the number of women in the High Peace Council and its provincial committees has increased, their role has remained largely symbolic since most female members of the provincial committees have had no role in negotiations with the armed opposition or decision making power in provincial committees. In December 2018, the provincial committees of the High Peace Council were suspended for reform in preparation for the upcoming negotiations.

During the first round of survey, the respondents were asked about the extent to which women should be involved in the peace process. The responses to this question display a very high degree of convergence across all variables. Men and women, different age groups, and urban and rural populations all see women’s involvement in peace negotiations as important (Figure 5).

Peace and Reconciliation

Given the secretive nature of the latest efforts to negotiate peace with the Taliban, there are rumors and worries about the concessions to the Taliban to achieve peace and the practical implications of these concessions in the post-peace period.

In addition to wanting a full withdrawal of international military forces from Afghanistan, the Taliban allegedly expect amendments to the Constitution and the legal framework, both of which contain numerous provisions for protecting women’s rights. And, since a negotiated peace would also entail re-integration of the Taliban, there are worries about the implications of having Taliban leaders and rank and file in government leadership positions and the civil service.
To gain a sense of these worries, the respondents were asked about the following post-peace possibilities.

**Inclusion of Taliban in Civil Service**

Forty four percent of the women agree with the inclusion of the Taliban in the civil service after a peace deal, compared to 56 percent of the men (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Inclusion of Taliban in Civil Service – By Sex**

![Bar chart showing inclusion of Taliban in Civil Service by sex](image)

There are no significant differences among respondents from different age groups for each sex. Views of male respondents in rural and urban areas strongly converge, with 58 percent of male urban residents and 52 percent of male rural residents agreeing to the inclusion of Taliban in the civil service (Figure 7). For women, 42 percent of those residing in urban areas agree to the inclusion of the Taliban in the civil service, compared to 58 percent of those living in rural areas.
Kabul province has the highest percentage of women agreeing to including the Taliban in the civil service after peace, at 64 percent, while Bamyan has the highest percentage of women disagreeing to the inclusion, at 80 percent (Figure 8). Balkh has the second highest percentage of women disagreeing with the inclusion of the Taliban in the civil service, at 56 percent.

Responses vary across provinces, particularly concerning female respondents. A majority of women in Bamyan and Balkh provinces tend to disagree to the inclusion of the Taliban in the civil service after a peace deal. Opposition is the strongest in Bamyan, where 80 percent disagree (Figure 8).

In Herat and Kandahar provinces, the percentages of women agreeing and disagreeing to the inclusion of the Taliban similar. In both provinces 46 percent of the women agree to the inclusion. The percentage

www.appro.org.af
of women disagreeing to the inclusion is lower in Kandahar, due in part to a significantly high percentage of women having no opinion on the issue.

Except for Bamyan, the majority of the male respondents agree to the inclusion of the Taliban in the civils service, with Herat having the highest percentage, at 77 percent, followed by Nangarhar (63 percent) and Balkh (62 percent). The views among men for and against the inclusion are divided almost evenly in Kandahar province, at 53 percent for inclusion and 39 percent against. Kandahar also has the highest percentage of men with no opinion either way, at 18 percent (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Inclusion of Taliban in Civil Service – Men, By Province

Divergences between the views of women and men are most prominent in Balkh and Herat, and most convergent in Kandahar.

Recruitment of Taliban in Security Forces

Respondents were asked about the extent to which they would agree to the recruitment of Taliban fighters into the security forces after a peace deal.

Among women of different age groups there is strong convergence, with the majority disagreeing to the Taliban being incorporated in the security forces (Figure 10). The highest level of agreement to the incorporation is among those over the age of 40, at 43 percent, while the lowest level of agreement is among those aged between 26 and 40 years of age.

Among men, 69 percent of those aged over 40 years agree to the incorporation, compared to 62 percent of those in the 26-40 age group and 57 percent of those in the 18-25 age group (Figure 11). The highest percentage of the men who do not have an opinion either way is in the 18-25 age group, at 8 percent. Also, the highest percentage of opposition among men to the incorporation is in the 18-25 age group, at 19 percent.
For both sexes, agreement to the recruitment of Taliban into the security forces tends to increase among older age groups.

Views expressed by urban and rural residents are largely convergent. They are almost exactly the same between urban and rural men, with 31 percent disagreeing with incorporation and 63 percent agreeing in each group. Rural women tend to disagree more, at 56 percent, than urban women at 48 percent.

Analysis at the provincial level reveals divergences among the provinces, particularly concerning the views of female respondents. A majority of the women in Nangarhar and Kandahar agree to the
recruitment of Taliban into the security forces. Also in Nangarhar and Kandahar, as well as Herat, the views of men and women tend to converge (Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Recruitment of Taliban in Security Forces – Women, By Province**

In contrast, the majority of the women in Kabul, Balkh and Bamyan tend to disagree with the incorporation of the Taliban into the security forces. Disagreement is the strongest in Bamyan, with 85 percent of female respondents. Bamyan is also the only province where a majority of male respondents disagree with the incorporation of the Taliban into the security forces, at 58 percent.

**Figure 13: Recruitment of Taliban in Security Forces – Men, by Province**

Among men, agreement to incorporation is the strongest in Herat, at 82 percent, followed by Bakh at 77 percent and Kabul at 71 percent (Figure 13).
Views of male and female respondents are most convergent in Kandahar and Nangarhar, and to a lesser extent, Bamyan, with Bamyan mirroring Kandahar and Nangarhar. The highest percentage of men disagreeing to the incorporation is in Bamyan, at 58 percent, and the lowest in Herat, at 16 percent.

**Releasing Taliban Prisoners**

The respondents were asked about the extent to which they would agree or disagree to releasing imprisoned Taliban fighters after a peace deal with the Taliban.

**Figure 14: Releasing Taliban Prisoners – By Sex**

![Chart showing percentage of men and women agreeing, disagreeing, and don't know/missing on releasing Taliban prisoners.]

n=2295

**Figure 15: Releasing Taliban Prisoners – By Age**

![Chart showing percentage of different age groups agreeing, disagreeing, and don't know/missing on releasing Taliban prisoners.]

n=1140

A large majority of all respondents, 62 percent, disagree to releasing Taliban prisoners. There is a convergence of views between men and women on this issue, though with a higher percentage of
women disagreeing, at 68 percent, compared to men at 56 percent (Figure 14). There is also a convergence of views among different age groups and urban and rural populations (Figure 15).

The most pronounced convergence of opinion among men and women on opposing the release of Taliban prisoners is in the 18-25 age group. Also, in the Over 40 age group, 62 percent of the women oppose the release, compared to 46 percent of the men.

Except for Kandahar, over 60 percent of the women in all other provinces disagree with releasing Taliban prisoners. In Kandahar, 32 percent of women disagree with the release. Kandahar is also the only province with the highest rate of respondents stating that they do not have an opinion, 28 percent of the women and 26 percent of the men (Figures 16 and 17).

**Figure 16: Releasing Taliban Prisoners – Women, By Province**

![Graph showing releasing Taliban prisoners among women by province](image)

n=1140

**Figure 17: Releasing Taliban Prisoners – Men, By Province**

![Graph showing releasing Taliban prisoners among men by province](image)

n=1155
Opposition to the release is the strongest in Bamyan, where 92 percent of the women and 84 percent of the men disagree, with most “strongly” disagreeing, women at 78 percent and men at 70 percent.

A similar convergence of views between men and women is observed in Nangarhar where 68 percent of the women and 69 percent of the men disagree with the release of Taliban prisoners.

Views of men and women strongly diverge in Herat and Kabul. In Herat, the vast majority of women tend to disagree with the release, at 80 percent, compared to 47 percent of the men.

In Kabul, 74 percent of the women disagree, compared to 40 percent of the men.

**Amnesty for Taliban**

During the first round of survey, the respondents were asked if an amnesty should be granted to Taliban fighters following a peace deal.

A majority of respondents of both sexes disagree to an amnesty, though this is much more prominent among female respondents than male respondents.

Sixty four percent of the women disagree to an amnesty, with 37 percent strongly disagreeing (Figure 18). The views of the men are less clear cut, with 49 percent disagreeing, compared with 44 percent who agree. Eleven percent of the women express no opinion on the amnesty, compared to seven percent of the men.

**Figure 18: Amnesty for Taliban – By Sex**

![Amnesty for Taliban – By Sex](image)

Opposition to an amnesty is the strongest among women of 18-25 and 26-40 age groups, at 66 percent of each group. Opposition to an amnesty among the men is strongest among the age group 18-25, at 54 percent. Of the men who are 40 years of age and older, 50 percent agree to an amnesty (Figure 19).
Views of women converge among age groups, though respondents aged above 40 tend to agree more to an amnesty than the other two groups.

The views of urban and rural populations on an amnesty are not significantly different.

**Figure 19: Amnesty for Taliban – By Age Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>18-25</th>
<th>26-40</th>
<th>Over 40</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=1140 n=1155

Except for Kandahar, the majority of the women in all other provinces disagree to an amnesty. In Kandahar, 43 percent of the women agree to an amnesty while 24 percent express no opinion, with both of these percentages being significantly higher than all other provinces (Figure 20).

**Figure 20: Amnesty for Taliban – Women, By Province**

n=1140
Women in Bamyan express the highest level of opposition to an amnesty, at 90 percent, compared with women in Kandahar at 32 percent.

The second highest percentage of women disagreeing with an amnesty is from Herat, at 76 percent, while the third highest percentage is from Nangarhar at 69 percent of the women.

Views of male respondents diverge among provinces. Sixty percent of the men in Kabul province agree to an amnesty, the highest percentage among all provinces, followed by Balkh at 59 percent and Herat at 50 percent (Figure 21).

The highest percentage of men disagreeing to an amnesty comes from Nangarhar at 69 percent, followed by Bamyan at 68 percent.

Views of men and women strongly converge in Nangarhar, Kandahar and Bamyan and diverge the most in Balkh, Kabul and Herat.

**Figure 21: Amnesty for Taliban – Men, By Province**

![Graph showing percentages of amnesty support by province for men.](image)

n=1155

**Revisions to the Constitution**

The Taliban representatives have publicly stated that they do not accept the current constitution as a legitimate document and that it needs to be amended and refined after a potential peace deal. The respondents were asked if there would be changes to the Constitution as part of the peace process.

The majority of the respondents, 57 percent, disagree with changes to the Constitution. Women’s disagreement is higher, at 63 percent, compared to men, at 55 percent. A significant percentage of the women, at 17 percent, have no opinion regarding revisions to the Constitution (Figure 22).
Among the age groups, the 18-25 group has the strongest opposition to revisions of the Constitution, 64 percent of the women and 59 percent of the men (Figure 23). In the Over 40 age group, 40 percent of men agree to revising the Constitution, compared to 28 percent of women. Also of note is the high percentages of women with no opinion on the issue in all age groups, 14 percent for 18-25, 18 percent for 26-40, and 23 percent for Over 40 years of age.

Close to one quarter the total number of women surveyed expressed no opinion about revising the Constitution as part of the peace process. Except for Kandahar, in all other provinces the majority of the women disagree with revising the constitution. The disagreement by women is strongest in Bamyan, at 93 percent, followed by Kabul, at 63 percent, and Herat, at 60 percent (Figure 24).

The highest percentages of women agreeing to revisions in the Constitution are in Kandahar, at 46 percent, and Nangarhar, at 39 percent. This compares to lowest percentages in Bamyan, at six percent, and Balkh, at nine percent.
Uncertainty, or having no opinion, among women about revising the Constitution is strongest in Balkh, at 44 percent, followed by Kabul at 23 percent. Views of men and women are most convergent in Kandahar and Nangarhar.

Figure 24: Revision to the Constitution – Women, By Province

In Herat, 60 percent of the women are opposed to revising the constitution, compared to 42 percent of the men (Figures 24 and 25). In Kabul, 63 percent of the women disagree to revisions in the Constitution, compared to 47 percent of the men.

Figure 25: Revision to the Constitution – Men, By Province

The highest percentage of men disagreeing to changes in the Constitution is in Bamyam, at 79 percent, followed by Balkh, at 58 percent, and Nangarhar, at 53 percent.
The highest percentage of men agreeing to changes in the Constitution is Herat, at 50 percent, followed by Kandahar, at 48 percent, Kabul, at 44 percent, and Balkh, at 40 percent. The highest percentage of those with no opinion is in Kandahar, at 10 percent, followed by Kabul, at nine percent.

**Amendments to Women-centered Laws**

The respondents were asked whether they agreed to changes to laws pertaining to women’s rights.

Overall, there is a 50/50 split between those who expect changes to women-centered laws and those who do not. Disaggregated, 56 percent of the women disagree, compared to 44 percent of men (Figure 26).

**Figure 26: Amendment to Laws – By Sex**

Also, a significant percentage of women do not have an opinion on the issue, at 22 percent, compared to 12 percent of the men.

There is a high convergence of views among age groups and between rural and urban residents. Women in rural areas are slightly more opposed to changes in laws, at 58 percent, compared to their urban counterparts, at 54 percent (Figure 27).
At the provincial level, Bamyan is the only province where a strong majority of both female and male respondents disagree with amending existing laws (Figures 28 and 29).

Except for Kandahar and Nangarhar, the majority of the women in all other provinces disagree with changes to the laws. In Kandahar, 38 percent of the women agree with changes while in Nangarhar this percentage is 42 (Figure 28).

Except for Bamyan, all other provinces have significantly high percentages of women without opinions about changes to laws, with the highest percentage being Balkh, at 45 percent followed by Herat at 27 percent, Kandahar, at 25 percent, and Kabul at 21 percent.
Bamyan has the highest percentage of men disagreeing with changes to the laws, at 81 percent. In all other provinces, the majority of the men agree with changes to the laws (Figure 29).

The highest percentage of men agreeing with changes in the laws are from Balkh, at 66 percent, followed by Nangarhar, at 50 percent, and Herat, at 44 percent. In Kabul, 42 percent of the men are in favor of changes to the laws (Figure 29).

There are significantly high percentages of men with no opinion about changes to the laws in Kandahar, at 26 percent, Kabul, at 19 percent, Herat, at 13 percent, and Nangarhar at 12 percent.

Figure 29: Amendment to Laws – Men, By Province

Consequences of Peace

The Government of Afghanistan has committed to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security through launching NAP 1325 which includes specific provisions for promoting women’s participation in all levels of government, including issues relating to peace and reconciliation. Further, NAP 1325 has provisions for protection of women from gender based violence, prevention of gender based violence, and relief and recovery for vulnerable and conflict-affected women.

In the first round of survey, the respondents were asked about the expected impact of a peace deal on the security situation in their province. During the second round, more specific focus was placed on how a peace deal would affect women’s rights, particularly as they relate to the provisions of NAP 1325. The questions sought to establish how the conditions for women will change after a peace agreement with the Taliban, with specific references to the provisions under the four pillars of NAP 1325.

Security Conditions After Peace

An overwhelming majority of all those surveyed expect improvements in security conditions as a consequence of peace. At the same time, around one third of all those surveyed expect no change in security conditions after a peace negotiated with the Taliban. Women are less optimistic than men in
terms of a peace deal improving the security conditions with 55 percent expecting improvements, compared to 69 percent of the men (Figure 30).

**Figure 30: Anticipated Impact of a Peace Deal on the Security Situation – By Sex**

![Graph showing the anticipated impact of a peace deal on security, split by sex.](image)

n=2295

There is convergence of views on the positive impact of peace on security conditions among different age groups and between urban and rural dwellers (Figure 31), with the majority of the respondents believing it is likely security will improve after a peace deal.

**Figure 31: Anticipated Impact of a Peace Deal on the Security Situation – By Location**

![Graph showing the anticipated impact of a peace deal on security, split by location.](image)

n=1274

n=1021

At the provincial level of analysis, the divergence of views is more pronounced though the trends shadow those at the aggregate level. For example, in Bamyan the majority of men and women expect no improvements in security conditions as a consequence of peace (Figures 32 and 33). Though not in majority, men and women in Kandahar appear to be less optimistic than men and women of other
provinces about improvements in security conditions, with 46 percent of the women and 38 percent of the men expecting no improvements.

**Figure 32: Anticipated Impact of a Peace Deal on the Security Situation – Women, By Province**

Among the women, women in Nangarhar are most optimistic about security improvements, at 66 percent, followed closely by women in Herat and Balkh, both at 63 percent (Figure 32).

**Figure 33: Anticipated Impact of a Peace Deal on the Security Situation – Men, By Province**

The men in Balkh are the most optimistic, at 89 percent, followed closely by Herat at 87 percent, and Nangarhar at 78 percent. The men in Bamyan are the most pessimistic, with 58 percent expecting no improvements (Figure 33).
The views of men and women are the most consistent with an almost even split between those who expect improvements and those who do not, with a relatively high percentage for those with no opinions, 10 percent for women and 12 percent for men (Figures 32 and 33).

In Kabul, 53 percent of the women and 70 percent of the men expect improvements in security as a result of peace, while the percentage of respondents with no opinion is significantly higher among women, at nine percent, compared to men, at three percent.

**Peace and Women in Civil Service**

During the second round of survey in February 2019, the respondents were asked about how they expected a peace deal with the Taliban would affect women in government services, including the security forces. There is a relative convergence of views between men and women, among different age groups, and between urban and rural residents on the consequence of peace for women in the civil service.

Women tend to believe more strongly in changes to the presence and role of women in the civil service, at 70 percent, than men, at 56 percent (Figure 34).

**Figure 34: Women in Civil Service After Peace – By Sex**

The percentages of men and women expecting changes to the presence and roles of women in the civil service are higher in rural areas than urban areas. Close to 80 percent of the women and 62 percent of men in rural areas expect changes to the condition of women in the civil service. This compares to 62 percent of the women and 52 percent of the men in urban areas (Figure 35).
Figure 35: Women in Civil Service After Peace – By Location

At the provincial level of analysis, the difference of views between men and women regarding changes to women’s conditions in the civil service after peace is most pronounced in Herat, where 70 percent of the women expect changes, compared to 78 percent of men who expect no changes (Figures 36 and 37).

The highest percentage of women expecting change is from Balkh, at 82 percent, followed by Kandahar at 76 percent and Herat at 70 percent. The highest percentage of women expecting no change is from Bamyan at 42 percent, followed by Kabul at 28 percent (Figure 36).

Figure 36: Women in Civil Service After Peace – Women, By Province

In Bamyan, while a majority of the men and women believes there will be changes, men at 66 percent and women at 54 percent, a significant minority “strongly” believes that there will be no changes.
Peace and Participation of Women in Elections

During the second round of survey, the respondents were asked about their expectations concerning changes in women’s participation in elections following a peace deal with the Taliban.

The majority of the respondents are of the view that a peace deal with the Taliban will lead to changes in women’s participation in elections. Women tend to expect change more, at 67 percent, than men, at 54 percent (Figure 38).

The views of men and women about changes to conditions for women to participate in elections are most convergent in Nangarhar, Kandahar, and Bamiyan. A relative convergence in views is observed
among age groups, and between urban and rural residents, though higher percentages of men and women in rural areas expect changes than urban residents. Seventy nine percent of the women in rural areas expect changes, compared to 59 percent of the women in urban areas while 60 percent of the men in rural areas expect changes, compared to 50 percent of the men in urban areas (Figure 39).

**Figure 39: Participation in Elections – By Location**

At the provincial level, the views of men and women about changes to conditions for women to participate in elections are most convergent in Nangarhar, Kandahar, and Bamyan (Figures 40 and 41).

Herat stands out with the views of men and women being almost the complete opposites. Sixty nine percent of the women in Herat expect changes, compared to 16 percent of the men.

**Figure 40: Participation in Elections – Women, By Province**

n=1241

n=1015

n=1138
Kandahar has the highest percentage of women expecting change, at 79 percent, followed by Balkh, at 78 percent, and Herat and Nangarhar, both at 69 percent (figure 40).

The highest percentage of men expecting change is from Nangarhar and Kandahar, both at 70 percent, followed by Bamyan, at 63 percent (Figure 41).

Figure 41: Participation in Elections – Men, By Province

![Bar chart showing percentage of men by province](image)

n=1118

**Peace and Women’s Access to Formal Justice**

In the second round of survey, the respondents were asked whether they expected changes to women’s access to formal justice after a peace deal with the Taliban. The majority of respondents believe there will be changes in women’s access to formal justice following a peace deal.

Figure 42: Access to Formal Justice – By Sex

![Bar chart showing percentage of women and men by access to formal justice](image)

n=2256
The majority of the women expect changes, at 67 percent, compared to men, at 49 percent (Figure 42). There is a relative convergence among age groups for both sexes, and between urban and rural residents, though rural residents, particularly women, are more inclined to believe women’s access to formal justice will change. Seventy seven percent of the women and 53 of the men from rural areas expect changes, compared to 59 percent of the women and 47 percent of the men in urban areas (Figure 43).

**Figure 43: Access to Formal Justice – By Location**

The majority of women in all provinces believe there will be changes in their access to justice following a peace deal with the Taliban. Provinces where women most strongly believe there will be changes are Kandahar and Balkh, both at 76 percent, and Herat at 70 percent (Figure 44).

**Figure 44: Access to Formal Justice – Women, By Province**
A significantly high percentage of women in Kandahar have no views on the question, at 19 percent. The proportions in the views of men and women tend to converge in Nangarhar, Kandahar, Kabul, and Bamyan.

The divergence of views between men and women is most pronounced in Herat, where 84 percent of men expect no change, compared to 70 percent of the women who expect change and Balkh, where 54 percent of the men expect no change, compared to 75 percent of the women who expect change (Figures 44 and 45).

Figure 45: Access to Formal Justice – Men, By province

Peace and Women’s Mobility

Women’s freedom of movement and their presence in public spaces have significantly improved since 2001. In recent months, women’s rights activists have expressed concerns over setbacks regarding these achievements in the event of a peace deal with the Taliban. The respondents were asked if they expected women’s presence in the public space and freedom of movement would change following a peace deal with the Taliban.

The majority of respondents expect that a peace deal with the Taliban will lead to changes in women’s access to the public space and mobility. A higher percentage of women expect change, at 77 percent, than men, at 53 percent (Figure 46).

There is high convergence of views between men and women from the different age groups, and between the urban and rural populations.
At the provincial level, trends observed are similar to those of the aggregated data. The majority of women in all provinces believe there will be changes in their place in the public space and mobility after peace with the Taliban (Figure 47). The highest percentage of women expecting change is from Kandahar, at 76 percent, followed closely by Balkh at 75 percent, and Herat, at 70 percent.

The highest percentage of women expecting no change is from Bamyan, at 40 percent, followed by Nangarhar at 34 percent and Kabul, at 31 percent.

Characteristically, Kandahar has the highest percentage of women with no opinion on the issue, at 19 percent.
The highest percentage of men expecting change is from Bamyan, Kandahar, and Nangarhar, all at around 65 percent (Figure 48). Eighty four percent of the men in Herat expect no change in women’s presence in public spaces and mobility, compared to 24 percent of the men in Kandahar.

The views of men and women diverge the most in Balkh and Herat. In Balkh, 75 percent of the women expect change, compared to 54 percent of the men expecting no change. In Herat, 70 percent of the women expect change, compared to 84 percent of the men expecting no change. Herat also has the highest percentage of men expecting no change, at 84 percent.

**Figure 48: Mobility – Men, By Province**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Likely to change</th>
<th>Unlikely to change</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamyan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nangarhar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=1118

**Peace and Women’s Access to Education**

Access to education for women and girls has gradually improved since 2001. Despite some moderation over the year in the view of the Taliban of education for girls, there is a general concern that a peace settlement with the Taliban is likely to result in limitations of access by women to education. To establish how much of a concern these limitations might be, the respondents were asked if they expected changes to the current arrangements for women’s access to education after a peace deal with the Taliban.

Sixty two percent of the women and 48 percent of the men across the provinces expect changes in access to education for women as a consequence of peace with the Taliban (Figure 49).

There is convergence in views on changes to access by women to education across the various age groups.
Figure 49: Access to Education – By Sex

Expectation of change is more pronounced in rural areas for both men and women, with 74 percent of women in rural areas expecting change, compared to 62 percent of women in urban areas (Figure 50).

Also, a higher percentage of men in rural areas expect change, at 53 percent, compared to men in urban areas, at 44 percent.

Figure 50: Access to Education – By Location

At a provincial level of analysis, the majority of women consider their access to education will change after a peace deal. This is most prominent in Kandahar and Balkh, with 75 percent of female respondents in each province, followed by Herat and Nangarhar, at 65 percent and 60 percent, respectively (Figure 51).
Views of male respondents converge with those of female respondents in Kandahar and Nangarhar, where proportions of those who believe there will be change and those who don’t are roughly similar to those of women. The views of men and women diverge strongly in Herat, Balkh, and Kabul, with men and women leaning toward opposite views (Figures 51 and 52).

**Figure 51: Access to Education – Women, By Province**

Almost equal proportions of men and women in Kandahar and Nangarhar expect changes, 74 percent of the men and 78 percent of the women in Kandahar and 60 percent of the men and the women in Nangarhar.

In Herat, the vast majority of male respondents expect no change in access to education for women, at 86 percent. In Kabul and Balkh, the same percentage is 62 and 57 percent, respectively.

**Figure 52: Access to Education – Men, By Province**

n=1138

n=1118
Peace and Women’s Access to Shelters

Although the existing number of shelters and the services they provide for vulnerable women have remained inadequate, shelters provide hundreds of women with safety and immediate protection from domestic, gender-based violence. The respondents were asked whether peace with the Taliban would result in change in access to shelters by women.

Of the six provinces surveyed, Kandahar does not have women’s shelters. This has resulted in high percentages of no response in Figures 53-56.

The majority of the men and the women expects changes in access to shelters, with men at 54 percent and women at 75 percent. The views are almost identical among different age groups of female respondents (Figure 53). Of the three age groups for men, the Over 40 group has the highest percentage for expecting change, at 69 percent. The lowest percentage for expecting change is from men aged between 26 and 40 years of age.

Figure 53: Access to Shelters – By Age Group and Sex

Respondents in rural areas are more expecting of change than their urban counterparts. Seventy four percent of the women and 69 percent of the men in rural areas believe changes will occur with respect to access to shelters. These compare to 59 percent and 50 percent, respectively, for women and men in urban areas (Figure 54).

Forty percent of the men in urban areas expect no change, compared to 22 percent of the men in rural areas.
Women’s responses are relatively consistent across provinces, though a higher proportion of women tend to believe there will be no changes in Nangarhar, at 34 percent, and Bamyan, at 40 percent, compared to six percent of the female respondents in Kabul (Figure 55).

The highest percentage of women expecting change is from Kabul, at 82 percent, followed by Herat and Balkh, both at 76 percent, and Bamyan, at 58 percent.

There is convergence of views between men and women regarding changes in access to shelters as an outcome of peace with the Taliban in Balkh, Bamyan, and Kabul (Figures 55 and 56).
A key divergence of views between men and women on the question of access to shelters is Herat, where 82 percent of the women expect change, compared to 62 percent of the men not expecting change.

**Figure 56: Access to Shelters – Men, by Province**

In Kabul, the proportion of men and women expecting changes is much higher than that of the aggregated data for all provinces, at 83 and 81 percent, respectively.
Summary of Findings

The key findings from this research are synthesized under various sub-themes, below.

Government Efforts and the Peace Process

The majority of men and women of all age groups are generally of the opinion that the government’s efforts in establishing the conditions for peace have been unsatisfactory. Women in urban areas are more skeptical than men about the government’s effectiveness in moving toward peace.

Women’s Role in the Peace Process

Men and women, different age groups, and urban and rural populations all see women’s involvement in peace negotiations as important.

Inclusion of Taliban in Civil Service

Forty four percent of the women agree with the inclusion of the Taliban in the civil service after a peace deal, compared to 56 percent of the men. There are no significant differences among respondents from different age groups for each sex. Also, the views of men in rural and urban areas strongly converge, with a slight majority of men agreeing to the inclusion of the Taliban in the civil service.

Women in rural areas are more accepting of the Taliban in the civil service than women in urban areas. Kabul province has the highest percentage of women agreeing to including the Taliban in the civil service after peace while Bamyan has the highest percentage of women disagreeing to the inclusion.

In Herat and Kandahar provinces, the percentages of women agreeing and disagreeing to the inclusion of the Taliban are similar. Except for Bamyan, the majority of the male respondents agree to the inclusion of the Taliban in the civil service, with Herat having the highest percentage, at 77 percent. The views among men for and against the inclusion are divided almost evenly in Kandahar province.

Divergences between the views of women and men are most prominent in Balkh and Herat, and most convergent in Kandahar.

Recruitment of Taliban in Security Forces

Among women of different age groups there is strong convergence, with the majority disagreeing to the Taliban being incorporated in the security forces. The highest level of agreement to the incorporation is among those over the age of 40, while the lowest level of agreement is among those aged between 26 and 40 years of age.

Among men aged 40 years and older, there is an overwhelming majority in favor of the incorporation. This majority is smaller for the 26-40 age group and smallest for the 18-25 age group. Views in urban and rural areas on incorporation of the Taliban into the security forces are largely convergent. Apart from urban women, the majority of the men from urban and rural areas and women from rural areas
are in favor of incorporation. Women in urban areas opposed to incorporation are a sizeable minority, at 48 percent.

For men and women, agreement to the recruitment of Taliban into the security forces tends to increase among older age groups. At the provincial level, there are significant differences between the provinces, particularly among the women. A majority of the women in Nangarhar and Kandahar agree to the recruitment of Taliban into the security forces, while the majority of the women in Kabul, Balkh and Bamyan tend to disagree with the incorporation.

Disagreement is the strongest in Bamyan, which is also the only province where a majority of the men disagree with the incorporation of the Taliban into the security forces. Among men, agreement to incorporation is the strongest in Herat, followed by Balkh and Kabul.

Views of male and female respondents are most convergent in Kandahar and Nangarhar, and to a lesser extent, Bamyan, with Bamyan mirroring Kandahar and Nangarhar. The lowest percentage of men disagreeing to the incorporation is from Herat.

**Releasing Taliban Prisoners**

A majority of those surveyed disagree with releasing Taliban prisoners. There is a convergence of views between men and women on this issue, though with a higher percentage of women disagreeing. There is also a convergence of views among different age groups and urban and rural populations. The most pronounced convergence of opinion among men and women on opposing the release of Taliban prisoners is in the 18-25 age group. In the Over 40 age group, 62 percent of the women oppose the release, compared to 46 percent of the men.

Opposition to the release is the strongest in Bamyan. A similar convergence of views between men and women is observed in Nangarhar with similar percentages of women and men disagreeing with the release of Taliban prisoners.

Views of men and women strongly diverge in Herat and Kabul, where the percentages of women disagreeing is almost twice as much as those of the men.

**Amnesty for Taliban**

A majority of those surveyed disagree to an amnesty for the Taliban, though this is much more prominent among female respondents than male respondents. Twice as many women disagree with an amnesty than men.

The views of women on amnesty for the Taliban converge among all age groups, though respondents aged above 40 tend to agree more to an amnesty than the other two groups. Opposition to an amnesty is the strongest among women of 18-25 and 26-40 age groups.

Women in Bamyan express the highest level of opposition to an amnesty, at 90 percent, compared women in Kandahar at 32 percent. The second highest percentage of women disagreeing with an amnesty is from Herat.
A sizeable majority of men in Kabul province agree to an amnesty, the highest percentage among all provinces. The highest percentage of men disagreeing to an amnesty is from Nangarhar at 69 percent, followed by Bamyan at 68 percent.

Views of men and women strongly converge in Nangarhar, Kandahar and Bamyan and diverge the most in Balkh, Kabul and Herat.

**Revisions to the Constitution**

The majority of the men and women surveyed disagree with changes to the Constitution, with women’s majority being slightly higher than men’s. A significant percentage of the women, at 17 percent, have no opinion regarding revisions to the Constitution.

Among the age groups, the 18-25 group has the strongest opposition to revisions of the Constitution, while in the Over 40 age group, a sizeable minority of men agree to revising the Constitution. Across all age groups, there are sizeable percentages of women with no opinion regarding changes to the Constitution.

Except for Kandahar, in all other provinces the majority of the women disagree with revising the constitution. The disagreement by women is strongest in Bamyan, followed by Kabul and Herat. The highest percentages of women agreeing to revisions in the Constitution are from Kandahar and Nangarhar. Uncertainty, or having no opinion, among women about revising the Constitution is strongest in Balkh, followed by Kabul. Views of men and women are most convergent in Kandahar and Nangarhar.

Provinces where the views of men and women diverge the most are Herat and Kabul. In Herat, 60 percent of the women are opposed to revising the constitution, compared to 42 percent of the men. In Kabul, 63 percent of the women disagree to revisions in the Constitution, compared to 47 percent of the men.

The highest percentages of men agreeing to changes in the Constitution are in Herat, followed by Kandahar, Kabul, and Balkh.

**Amendments to Women-centered Laws**

Overall, there is a 50/50 split between those who expect changes to women-centered laws and those who do not. Almost one quarter of the women surveyed do not have an opinion on the issue.

There is a high convergence of views among age groups and between rural and urban residents. Women in rural areas are slightly more opposed to changes in laws than their urban counterparts.

Except for Kandahar and Nangarhar, the majority of the women in all other provinces disagree with changes to the laws. Bamyan is the only province where a strong majority of both female and male respondents disagree with amending existing laws.
Except for Bamyan, all other provinces have significantly high percentages of women without opinions about changes to laws, with the highest percentage being Balkh, followed by Herat, Kandahar, and Kabul.

Bamyan has the highest percentage of men disagreeing with changes to the laws. In all other provinces the majority of the men agree with changes to the laws, with Balkh having the highest percentage, followed by Nangarhar, Herat, and Kabul.

Over one quarter of the men in Kandahar have no opinion about changes to the laws. In Kabul the percentage of men with no opinion is around one fifth of the men.

Security Conditions After Peace

An overwhelming majority of all those surveyed expect improvements in security conditions as a consequence of peace. There is convergence of views on the positive impact of peace on security conditions among different age groups, between urban and rural dwellers, and, to some extent, among the provinces.

Women in Nangarhar are the most optimistic about security improvements, followed closely by women in Herat and Balkh.

The men in Balkh are the most optimistic, followed closely by Herat Nangarhar. The men in Bamyan are the most pessimistic about security improving after peace.

Peace and Women in Civil Service

There is relative convergence of views between men and women, among different age groups, and between urban and rural residents on the consequence of peace for women in the civil service. Women tend to expect more strongly than men in changes to the presence and role of women in the civil service.

At the provincial level of analysis, the difference of views between men and women regarding changes to women’s conditions in the civil service after peace is most pronounced in Herat.

The highest percentage of women expecting change to the presence and role of women in the civil service is from Balkh, followed by Kandahar and Herat.

Peace and Participation of Women in Elections

The majority of the respondents are of the view that a peace deal with the Taliban will lead to changes in women’s participation in elections. The views of men and women about changes to conditions for women to participate in elections are most convergent in Nangarhar, Kandahar, and Bamyan.

A relative convergence in views is observed among age groups, and between urban and rural residents, though higher percentages of men and women in rural areas expect changes than urban residents. The
percentage of women expecting changes to women’s participation in elections is higher in rural areas than urban areas.

Herat stands out with the views of men and women being almost the complete opposites with the majority of the women expecting changes to their participation in elections and the majority of men expecting there would be no change.

Kandahar has the highest percentage of women expecting change, followed by Balkh, Herat and Nangarhar. The highest percentage of men expecting change is from Nangarhar and Kandahar, followed by Bamyan.

Peace and Women’s Access to Formal Justice

The majority of respondents believe there will be changes in women’s access to formal justice following a peace deal. There is a relative convergence among age groups for both sexes, and between urban and rural residents. Women in rural areas are more inclined to believe women’s access to formal justice will change.

The majority of women in all provinces believe there will be changes in their access to justice following a peace deal with the Taliban. Provinces where women most strongly believe there will be changes are Kandahar, Balkh, and Herat. A significantly high percentage of women in Kandahar have no views on the question.

The divergence of views between men and women is most pronounced in Herat, where an overwhelming majority of men expects no change and an overwhelming majority of women expects change. A similar, though less pronounced, pattern exists in Balkh.

Peace and Women’s Mobility

The majority of respondents expect that a peace deal with the Taliban will lead to changes in women’s access to the public space and mobility. There is high convergence of views between men and women from the different age groups, and between the urban and rural populations.

The highest percentage of women expecting changes to their mobility is from Kandahar, followed closely by Balkh and Herat. The highest percentage of women expecting no change is from Bamyan, followed by Nangarhar and Kabul.

The overwhelming majority of men in Herat expect no change in women’s presence in public spaces and mobility. The views of men and women diverge the most in Balkh and Herat.

Peace and Women’s Access to Education

There is convergence in views on changes to access by women to education across the various age groups. Expectation of change is more pronounced in rural areas for both men and women.
In rural areas, the percentage of men expecting change in access to education is higher than the percentage for men in urban areas.

The overwhelming majority of the women expect that their access to education will change after a peace deal. This is most prominent in Kandahar and Balkh, followed by Herat and Nangarhar. The views of men and women diverge strongly in Herat, Balkh, and Kabul, with men and women leaning toward opposite views.

In Herat, the vast majority of male respondents expect no change in access to education for women.

**Peace and Women’s Access to Shelters**

The majority of the men and the women expects changes in access to shelters. The views are almost identical among different age groups of female respondents. Of the three age groups for men, the Over 40 group has the highest percentage for expecting change. The lowest percentage for expecting change is from men aged between 26 and 40 years of age. Respondents in rural areas are more expecting of change than their urban counterparts.

Women’s responses are relatively consistent across provinces. The highest percentage of women expecting change in access to shelters is from Kabul, followed by Herat, Balkh, and Bamyan.

A key divergence of views between men and women on the question of access to shelters is Herat, where an overwhelming majority of the women expect change, compared to a sizeable majority of the men expecting change. In Kabul, the proportion of men and women expecting changes is much higher than that of the aggregated data for all provinces.

**Conclusion**

The completion of this report coincides with the ending of a Loya Jirga on peace, being held in Kabul on April 29 to May 2, 2019 with 3,200 participants, drawn from different corners and communities of the country, including areas and communities under the direct rule of the Taliban.

The latest attempt by the Government of Afghanistan to send 250 government and civil society representatives to Doha to attend the scheduled talks between the Taliban and a group of Afghans, facilitated by the US Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, was turned down by the Taliban and others on the grounds that the number was too high for preliminary peace talks.35

There are concerns about the latest rounds of peace negotiations, including the fact that the group that has been meeting with the Taliban since November 2018 does not include non-aligned representatives from civil society or the Government of Afghanistan. The group holding peace talks with the Taliban is viewed with suspicion by civil society and government officials alike, and as lacking legitimacy. For many

---

observers, compromises with the Taliban on the rights of women, youth, and minorities are likely to counter constitutional rights and provisions.

Regardless of the concerns about the terms of a negotiated peace with the Taliban in segments of the population, particularly among women, youth, and ethnic and religious minorities and the rumors about a new constitution more in line with sharia as one of the key demands of the Taliban, there remains a charged wave of optimism about peace.

The findings of this research strongly show Afghans’ desire for peace carries with it an implicit expectation that a negotiated peace is likely to significantly alter at least some of the rights-related gains made since 2001. These gains include a degree of formal democracy never experienced before, re-entrance of women into different facets of social, economic and political life, access to basic services in health, education and formal justice, and exposure to diversity of thinking and seeing the world in different lights. There is also concern, particularly among women, about possible amendments to the Constitution and the provisions in the current legal framework upholding and protecting equal rights of men and women. At the same time, findings suggest there is general acceptance that a negotiated peace will entail the participation of Taliban in institutions of governance.

Since 2001 Afghans have also witnessed the loss of numerous opportunities for socio-economic betterment due to endemic corruption and ongoing armed conflict. Without the armed conflict ending, it is at best difficult to tackle the issue of corruption, closely linked with insecurity and different forms of smuggling. Findings show that in all provinces but Bamyan, men and a relatively strong minority of women are willing to agree to integrating the Taliban in the civil service and the security forces. This indicates that a majority of Afghans either accept or are resigned to the idea of Taliban returning in a governing position, as long as peace is instituted.

The war with the Taliban cannot be won by either side. Previously, APPRO has argued that the armed conflict between the Taliban and the government backed by international military power has reached a “mutually hurting stalemate”, a situation where neither of the two sides engaged in protracted and sporadic battle can win. The outcome of a mutually hurting stalemate is more deaths of the fighters from both sides, mounting civilian casualties, and a general state of misery and hopelessness for the broader population.

Two conditions are necessary for the warring sides of the conflict in Afghanistan to negotiate peace. First is the persistence of the deadlock in the war between the Taliban and the government and its allies. This conflict cannot be overcome by either side through escalating the conflict. Past experiences with different “surges” show that this is not an option for the United States. The Taliban also do not appear to have the means to fundamentally escalate the conflict to “win”.

Second is the existence or possibility of a mutually perceived way out of the deadlock with both sides seeing that a negotiated solution is possible and that a framework, satisfactory to both parties, can be found or established to begin a dialogue for peace.

At the present time both of these conditions hold true for the warring sides in Afghanistan and, as such, there is a momentum for peace, however imperfect or incomplete the process may be.

---

Ways Forward

That efforts are being made to start peace negotiations for Afghanistan, albeit without transparency and accountability, is more than likely due to the pressures of the mutually hurting stalemate between the Taliban and its main protagonist, the United States. Despite this implicitly recognized fact, and the exclusion of Afghan civil society and elected government authorities from the various peace-related events, the current talks should also be viewed as an opportunity, particularly by civil society, to exert itself by articulating the price it is willing to pay to reach peace and the various redlines it wishes to establish.

The articulation must be based on as full as possible an understanding of ordinary citizens’ needs, anxieties and hopes. The understanding must come from dialogue and in-depth examination of some of the issues that have surfaced in the two surveys conducted for this research paper and similar recent attempts to increase understanding of ordinary Afghans’ concerns and expectations.

In its capacity as the Secretariat of National Advocacy Committee for Public Policy (NAC-PP), APPRO will convene an open forum in June or July of 2019 to engage different segments of civil society in a dialogue on peace. Similar events should be organized by other civil society organizations and associations with the means to organize such events, by themselves or in coordination and collaboration with other organizations.

At the same time, Afghan civil society organizations with mandates that include research need to initiate, with backing from their funders, in-depth and applied qualitative research into the dynamics of armed conflict at the subnational level and the underlying factors that shape perceptions and expectations of citizens in relation to peace negotiations and their aftermath.