

Afghanistan: Women, Peace, and Security – Summary of Key Documents (2010-13)

(1) Afghan Women Network (2012) *Women Count. Security Council Resolution 1325: Civil Society Monitoring Report 2012*, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders. Available at: http://www.gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Afghanistan_Report.pdf

Without clear data, it is difficult to determine how much women stand to lose as troop withdrawals continue. This report is a summary of key underlying issues that affect the treatment and status of women in Afghanistan as they relate to the UNSCR 1325. Data are collected through desk and field research (throughout all Afghanistan). The indicators measured were:

- **Index of women's participation in governance** (women have 27% of seats in parliament; there are 3 female ministers; women make 20% of all government employees; women have largest presence in government at the federal level, while in provinces, women are invisible in leading positions; there is ONE female governor (Bamyian) and ONE female mayor (Daykundi)—both are in Hazara-dominated provinces). [NB: This is quantitative, qualitative research has shown that women lack cooperation and a coherent platform with many rivalries remaining]
- **Percentage of women in peace negotiating teams and breakdown of gender issues addressed in peace agreements** (no official peace negotiation at present; 21% of women were present in the Peace Jirga in 2010; at the Kabul Conference that followed, Taliban former fighters were reintegrated and it was not clear how women's rights would fit into this plan; 9 women (and 61 men) participate in the High Peace Council; 75 women are in Provincial Peace Councils (number of men unknown); 4 women are members of the Afghanistan Peace and Reconciliation Programme (number of men unknown).
- **Index of women's participation in the justice sector** (women lack leadership roles; no women in the Supreme Court); **security sector** (ANA (1.179% are women), Air Force (0.052% are women), ANP (0.918% are women); and **peacekeeping missions** (no missions active in the country).
- **Number and % of women participating in each type of constitutional or legislative review.** From the provinces 18.6% of women were chosen as delegates along with 25 men and 25 women who were selected by Karzai; another 15% of women were among the 42 delegates representing a wide range of groups like refugees, IDPs, Hindus and Sikhs, and nomads. Laws and policies passed do not always conform to the requirements of international human rights, Afghan Constitution or Islamic law, like in the case of Shia Personal Status law.
- **CSOs in task forces on UNSCR 1325.** Afghanistan had 20 government and 2 CSOs members in the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325.
 - **Level of SGBV** (569 in 2011) and **percentage of cases investigated and prosecuted** (4,940 in 2009, 2010 and 2011).
 - **Number and quality of gender-responsive laws and policies** (EVAW law, officially passed in 2011; regulation of shelters; others are NAPWA and ANDS)
 - **Number and nature of provisions/recommendations in the truth and reconciliation commission and other transitional justice reports on women's rights.** There is no Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the closest is the APRP reintegration of former insurgents into communities.
 - **Percentage of women (versus men) who receive economic packages in conflict resolution and reconstruction processes** (reintegration programme overseen by the APRP has been

receiving funds since 2010 to conduct outreach with former fighters through economic packages. **It is not clear whether women were assisted).**

- **Number of percentage of pre-deployment and post-deployment programs for military and police incorporating UNSCR 1325, UNSCR 1820, and international human rights law instruments and IHL** Mol said there are but details remain unknown.
 - **Allocated and disbursed funding marked for women, peace and security (WPS) projects and programs.** Focus on WPS is small.
- **Allocated and disbursed funding marked for women, peace and security projects and programs (WPS) for the government.** Data difficult to obtain and these include funding for the implementation of NAPWA to meet its development goals; APRP support for gender inclusivity and others. The amount of budget going into these programmes is unknown.

Fieldwork: Unclear

(2) APPRO (March, 2013) *Monitoring Women’s Security in Transition*, Available at: <http://appro.org.af/publications/>

This study tries to examine whether women’s hard-won rights are put at risk in the transition process (when IMF/ISAF handover the security to ANSF). It examines the ways in which the security transition affects the overall well-being of women (including women’s needs during and after the transition). The principal idea of this monitoring study was to visit and re-visit a number of selected districts across Afghanistan in four cycles to trace and observe any possible change in their individual security situation between the cycles, over a period of approximately 12 months.

Key findings:

District centers remain unaffected by the security transition, but surroundings became inaccessible due to a higher AOG presence. [Withdrawal of IMF/ANSF also leads to reduction of NGOs] The latter has a negative impact on women’s rights.

Achievements	Threats/Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School enrolment of women is higher since the transition began (lower in Lashargah); • Improved female mobility and diminished public harassment of women (ANP increased its effort to protect women in public) registered in Herat, Dawlatabad, Balkh, Paghman. • Improved community perception of working women improving in secure areas (especially in education, health, and government offices). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in employment opportunities and development projects for women; • Increased hostility towards women who work outside home from community and family side (in insecure areas only). • Increased forced early marriages which leads to an increase in run-away cases. • More cases of VAW (maybe because women more aware)

Fieldwork: Interviews with a wide range of people from the visited districts, organized in categories (prominent women, women working in government, women working, housewives, vocational training centers, CSO, girl’s schools, elders, health clinics, ANP/FRU). Focus group discussions with three selected community groups: elders, working women and housewives (women that don’t work in public). In total, 176 individuals were interviewed and 27 focus groups discussions were held in nine districts in seven

provinces across Afghanistan: North (Balkh, Samangan); Kabul, East (Laghman, Nangarhar), South (Helmand), (West) Herat.

(3) Asia Foundation (2012) *Afghanistan in 2012: A Survey of the Afghan People*. Available at:
<http://asiafoundation.org/publications/pdf/1163>

The survey provides insights into Afghans' views on such issues as security, national reconciliation, the economy, development and essential services, the quality of governance and political participation, corruption, justice, women's issues and gender equality, and the media.

The survey identifies the main challenges that women face:

- lack of education/illiteracy (rose from 25% in 2011 to 29% in 2012)
- Lack of employment opportunities (from 2% in 2011 to 14% in 2012), which is a serious rise and possibly indicates a serious decline of female work opportunities in 2012.
- Lack of women's rights. The proportion of respondents identifying the lack of women's rights as a major problem facing women dropped slightly in 2012 from 2011 (from 14% to 10%), and it is much lower than 2006 (18%).
- ANA seen as more professional than ANP. However, both still need foreign assistance and are not able to operate on their own.

Fieldwork: 6,290 respondents, all provinces.

(4) ActionAid (2012) *From the Ground Up, Women's Roles in Local Peacebuilding in Afghanistan, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sierra Leone*. Available at:
http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/from_the_ground_up_-_full_report.pdf

This report provides qualitative evidence on the roles of women in local peacebuilding in Afghanistan (and 4 other countries). It examines how women supported by women's rights organizations, are building peace in their communities.

Key findings:

- Different Definition of peace between men and women:
 - Women are more likely than men to adopt a broad definition of peace which includes the household level and focuses on the attainment of individual rights and freedoms such as education, healthcare and freedom from violence
 - Men have a greater tendency to associate peace with the absence of formal conflict and the stability of formal structures.
- Post-conflict period has opened spaces for women to organize collectively. Challenges to women's right remain (lack of justice; political involvement is nominal; equal right in constitution have not led to significant gains in practice. There was an increase in women's agency to organise collectively and assert power in decision-making.
- Women face multiple barriers to participate in peacebuilding: restrictive social norms, VAW and girls, poverty and economic inequality, inequality in access to education, women often de-value their role as peacebuilders, and (un)sustainability of support.
- Women are very active in their homes to build trust, solve disputes, ensure children are educated, etc. These actions are frequently dismissed as irrelevant or are not sufficiently valued (by both men and women) despite the fact that peace often starts with families.

Fieldwork: Primary fieldwork was based on qualitative data collection. 10-15 key informants were interviewed in every country: staff from local civil society organizations, government representatives and community members. Three to four focus group discussions were also conducted in each of the communities, separating community members into groups of young women (aged under 20 years), women aged 20 years and older, men and, where possible, local officials. Research was done in Kabul (urban and peri-urban community) and Balkh (rural community).

(5) ActionAid (2011) *A Just Peace, The Legacy of War for the Women of Afghanistan*, available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/a_just_peace.pdf

This report points to how Afghan women who fear they could lose the fragile gains in women's rights made since the fall of the Taliban. This report examines what has changed for Afghan women in the last decade, and what prospects there are for retaining any of the positive achievements during the time of transition and reconciliation.

Key findings:

- 86% are afraid of a return to a Taliban state government
- 66% feel safer than they did 10 years ago
- If troops leave 37% of women think it would become a worse place and 28% a better place.
- 41% though Afghanistan would be less safe when troops leave, while 33% thought it would be safer.
- The biggest fear for women under 30 is sexual assault (40% of respondents) and women of all ages were more afraid of sexual assault (30%) than abduction, kidnapping or being caught in an explosion combined (24% of respondents).
- 4 out of 10 women never leave their village or neighbourhood.
- 60% voted in the last parliamentary elections; 1 in 10 of those surveyed cast their vote as directed by their husband or father.

Fieldwork: Survey of 1,000 women in Kabul, North: Balkh, South: Kandahar, West: Herat, Central: Bamyan.

(6) Afghan Women's Network (May 2012), *Women's Security and Transition in Afghanistan: Measuring the success of transition by lasting protections for women's security*, available at: <http://www.afghanwomensnetwork.af/Latest%20Updates/Position%20Paper-%20Impact%20of%20Transition%20on%20Women's%20Security-%20English.pdf>

For the position paper 300 women (leaders) were consulted regarding their perception on the security of transition, involvement and impact of transition it had on their mobility, security and access to public space.

Key findings:

- Women have not meaningfully participated in the planning of the Security Transition (In provinces where it has not yet started women do not believe they will be involved in consultation).
- ANSF not sympathetic to the needs of children and women
 - ANSF was not trained to respond to issues regarding the safety of women and children.

- Not enough attention is paid to improving the rule of law, governance and access to justice. Issues and disputes are still solved in local *shuras* and councils. Also there was limited promotion (from international community's side) of access to justice, rule of law and good governance in the provinces.
- Afghan Local Police seen as having negative impact on women's freedom of movement. Families have imposed restrictions on their women due to ALP presence.

The women consulted came from: Balkh, Jowzjan, Faryab, Samangan, Kandahar, Helmand, Urzgan, Zabul, Nimroz, Jalalabad, Nooristan, Laghman, Kunar, Herat, Farah, Badghis, Ghor, Bamyam, Daikundi, Takhar, Baghlan, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Kabul, Logar, Wardak, Panjsher, Kapisa.

(7) Afghan Women's Network (2011) UNSCR 1325 Implementation in Afghanistan. Available at: <http://www.afghanwomennetwork.af/Latest%20Updates/1325%20English.pdf>

This report examines the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UN SCR) 1325 implementation in Afghanistan using a set of indicators: national and local governance, peace negotiating teams, justice and security, peacekeeping missions, constitutional or legislative review, CSOs in task forces on SCR 1325 and 1820, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), gender responsive laws and policies, truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) and other transitional justice, gender and peace education. Indicators were fine tuned through consultations with AWN members and used for field based and desk research in Afghanistan.

Key findings:

- Afghan women's participation in the areas of governance, security, peace and justice has certainly expanded since 2001. However, there are extensive gaps in how much access women have to positions with influence and decision making power, to safety and security at the most basic level.
- Similarly, protection from and prevention of violence and abuse against women and girls has been incorporated into the body of the Afghan Constitution. Despite this, women and girls continue to face violence and abuse at the hands of family, community members and or people affiliated with the parties in conflict.

Fieldwork: All provinces. 30 questionnaires in each zone (therefore 240). Those surveyed included teachers, police, staff of the provincial arm of MOWA, Department of Women's Affairs (DOWA), human rights workers, members of councils, and staff of women's shelters

(8) Afghan Women's Network (2010) Afghan Women in the Peace Process, Available at: http://internationalnetworkforpeace.org/IMG/pdf/Afghan_women_in_peace_process.pdf

The short paper lists some women's achievements in Afghanistan. However, there is still a massive lack of a gender perspective in the security sector:

- women's representation in the security sector remains low
- the implementation of UN SCR 1325 has been marginal, and
- threats to women working in the public space and other development agents who are engaged in promoting women's advancement have been prevalent.

Key findings: The short paper describes the development, achievements, results and challenges in the peace sector.

Fieldwork: Not given.

(9) CARE (2012) *Women and Transition in Afghanistan*. Available at:

<http://www.care.org/newsroom/publications/reports/2012/2012-women-afghanistan-report-tokyo-conference.pdf>

This policy brief stresses that as security worsens, precious gain made by women are in jeopardy. It also advances some recommendations.

- Strengthen quality controls on aid for statebuilding.
 - Donors are committed to increase funding through the Afghan government.
 - Benchmarks should be established. Progress against sector specific benchmarks in state capacity and accountability at central and sub-national levels.
 - Information on women's and girls' access to services in a safe, effective and accountable fashion should inform the design and monitoring of this benchmark.
- Reprioritize humanitarian action to conflict-affected communities.
Women should play a core role in humanitarian assessments and Aid delivery will be essential to adequately meeting women's needs.
- Implement a robust accountability framework.
 - Civil society should participate, including at sub-national level.
 - Women should be involved in defining its content and monitoring its implementation.
 - Gender indicators should be also included.
- Ensure governance reforms to protect gains in women's participation.
 - Proposals to reform and strengthen provincial and district governance involve engagement with tribal structures and political compromises that poses challenges for women's rights and participation.

Fieldwork: not given.

(10) Cortright, D. and K. Wall (August 2012), *Afghan Women Speak – Enhancing Security and Human*

Rights in Afghanistan, University of Notre Dame, available at:

http://kroc.nd.edu/sites/default/files/Afghan_Women_Speak_Report.pdf

This report aims to provide options for Western policymakers to protect women's gains while pursuing political solutions to the conflict.

- Afghan women fear that their gains may be sacrificed in a peace deal.
- Interviewees voiced fears about a return to Taliban-style *Sharia* law and a loss of their constitutional rights, mobility, and access to work and education should insurgent leaders gain domestic political influence.
- They also worry about a return to civil war as foreign troops withdraw.

Key findings:

- The escalating violence in many of the provinces jeopardizes rights and opportunities of women.

- Women that work for the government, NGOs, and speak up are at risk of being accused as anti-Islamic and therefore subject to intimidation and killing.
- The government does not safeguard vulnerable women
 - 400 women imprisoned for ‘moral crimes’
 - government does not support shelters
- Female participation and employment in the civil service, security sector and the judiciary made little progress since 2006
 - Women in civil service positions increased from 22% in 2006 to 25% in 2011. These women face two serious obstacles: family pressure that tries to prevent them from working and discrimination at work place.
- There is progress in the education sector: there was a rise in girls’ enrollment , number of female teachers and the number of schools built across the country.
 - 39% of the teaching workforce is now female
 - Communities also tend to support girls’ education. Schools built by NGOs with community participation are considered less vulnerable to AOG attacks.
- The expansion of AOG controlled areas has a stronger impact on women than on men:
 - These risk becoming victims of sexual violence. As insecurity increases the number of child and force marriages in communities since families prefer to marry their daughters at a young age rather than risking them taken by militia commanders.
- Political solutions and recommendations.

Fieldwork (provinces included were not specified): This report draws on more than 70 interviews conducted from November 2009 to April 2012, including fieldwork in Kabul, Afghanistan, in April and May 2010 and in October 2011. Interviews were conducted with Afghan women leaders, parliamentarians, activists, school principals, nongovernmental organization staff, and health workers. We interviewed senior Afghan women in the police force and army, government officials, foreign diplomats, United Nations officials, a senior International Security Assistance Force official, analysts, and former Taliban figureheads. We also spoke to senior State Department officials, NGO workers, and Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) commanders and staff in the United States.

(11) Heinrich Boell (2012) *Women’s perception of the ANP*. Available at:
http://www.boell.de/downloads/democracy/PPS_new.pdf

This study examines the perception of women on ANP in Kabul. Active urban women, as having more chances to interact with ANP, were selected for the study. The report seeks to establish a gender-focused baseline for the evaluation of community trust building and police capacity building programs; identify major trends and evolutions in public perceptions of the ANP in Kabul, notably amongst women; and propose pragmatic recommendations for improving the relationship between Afghan women and the police.

Key findings:

- Positive police approval ratings by both women and men should not be interpreted as a sign of satisfaction with the police, but rather low expectations.
- The police sector appears to be advancing more quickly than Afghan society in terms of its recognition of women’s risks, needs and rights.

- Much of the gender-related progress in the ANP is the result of pressure from the international community.
 - The necessity of women police is accepted by the ANP and Afghan society, albeit with restricted roles.
- Although half of Kabul women are victims of domestic violence, most women would never turn to the police for assistance.

Fieldwork: Kabul

(12) HRRAC (2012) *Women's Participation in the Peace Process*. Available at: <http://www.afghanadvocacy.org.af/Research.aspx>

This research tries to assess women's participation in the Afghan peace process (as mandated by the UN Security Council 1325 resolution).

Key findings:

- Women are marginalized in the peace negotiations (in number and quality of participation). The obstacles to a meaningful participation are:
 - Glass Ceiling and a male dominated society;
 - traditional values such as gender segregation or virtuosity;
 - Taliban;
 - elite oriented processes (former TB leaders, warlords and government representatives are present);
 - lack of political will for including women;
 - lack of transparency;
 - tacit policy to marginalize women.
- It proposes some steps to reform the peace process:
 - Transparency of peace negotiations,
 - Maximum participation
 - Participation of human rights institutions
 - Protection of Women's Rights
 - Inclusion of citizens's Perspectives in the Peace Process
 - Tacit policy to marginalize women

The authors also call for a change in the methodology of the peace process: under the traditional shura system, women youth and other vulnerable groups are not given an equal opportunity. The shura should be reformed in terms of being more inclusive for the latter groups (by integrating an independent party).

Fieldwork: Kabul, Nangarhar, Herat, Balkh, Badakshan

(13) Wilkens, A (November 2012), *Missing the Target – A report on the Swedish Commitment to Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan*. Available at: http://www.sak.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/1325-Report_layout_final.pdf

After the withdrawal of the international troops in 2014 Afghans fear that the re-entry of Taliban into government affairs. If so, the substantial gains regarding women's mobility and visibility in society will

then be erased. This report provided a context to and an overview of the effects in Afghanistan of the international commitment to UNSCR 1325 and ensuing resolutions forming the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Against this background, the report specifically analyses Sweden's role based on its National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (NAP).

Violence against women, addressed in 3 reports, remains a pervasive problem affecting Afghan women and a major barrier for experiencing security. AIHRC (2012) reported an alarming number of cases of violence against women (more than 3000) registered in the first six months (beginning on the 21st of March 2012). The types of violence reported were physical; verbal and psychological; economic; sexual violence and other. There was a substantial increase of registered cases if compared to the 1544 women experiencing violence in the year 1390 (2011 / 2012) according to AIHRC's database.

UNAMA (2010) argues that women face several challenges to access justice: dominance of traditional justice mechanisms; increased control of insurgents and insecurity in some areas; and challenges with ANP, prosecution and courts (like withdrawal of complaints, power imbalance, lack of skills, etc). UNAMA (2012) goes on to document particular customary practices that violate the rights of women and girls throughout Afghanistan (honour killings, child marriage, *baad*, *badal*, running away, etc.), describes the government's response to these practices that in 2009 passed the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) and makes recommendations to end such practices.

Two years later **UNAMA (2012)** investigated to what extent was the EVAW law applied in practice and concluded that its implementation was low despite some improvements.

The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (2012) recorded 4,010 cases of violence against women from 21 March to 21 October 2012 throughout Afghanistan compared to 2,299 cases it recorded for the entire solar year in 2011 (from 21 March 2010 to 21 March 2011). The report noted progress in the registration and application of the EVAW law by prosecutors and primary courts compared to the previous reporting period. However, when placed in the general context of 4,010 reported incidents by AIHRC, the xx number of cases resolved through the judicial process and convictions using the EVAW law remained very low (prosecution registered 1538 cases; city courts 378 cases; 740 cases were reported to ANP, 401 forwarded them to prosecutors and 312 were withdrawn).