



Dated: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2011

## To the Parliamentarians of the Federal Republic of Germany

Respected Parliamentarians,

Germany has a long history of friendship with the Afghan people. During hard times, Germany has helped Afghanistan and, after the fall of the Taliban, the 2001 Bonn Conference was the first international panel on the future of Afghanistan and the foundation of a new, democratic Afghanistan.

We, a focus group of representatives of Afghan civil society, are aware of the fact that the 2011 Bonn Conference will be, once again, an important milestone for debating Afghanistan's future. Most of you, respected members of the German Parliament, have not had the chance to come and see the achievements in Afghanistan. Therefore, we, a group of concerned Afghan civil society representatives, have held focus group discussions at the Kabul office of Heinrich Böll Stiftung, in order to convey to you our views regarding the 2011 Bonn Conference. The views expressed in this document reflect our experiences and are based on our true belief in the recommendations given.

We know of the sacrifices the German people are making and hereby want to extend our condolences for the loss of lives of German military and civilian personnel that came to our country to help. At this point in time, we want to address you to ensure you of our commitment to build a peaceful future for our country and to ask for your political support.

1. **The root causes** of Afghanistan's problems are numerous, including ideology, difficult neighbourhood, and competition for natural resources. Opium, drug trafficking, and corruption have also played a major role in the deterioration of the security situation. Over the last four decades, Afghans have experienced about eight different regimes, including monarchy, communism, Islamic Emirate, democracy. We firmly believe that for Afghanistan there is no better system than democracy. The democratic experience of the last ten years is a novelty in Afghanistan history. Among its considerable achievements are the constitution of 2004, civil and political liberties, human rights, the construction of roads and basic health care units in all provinces, and the development of a basic economic infrastructure in many regions of our country.
2. **After 2005**, the international community changed its strategy. Since then Afghan civil society has been sidelined on most issues of national importance. We, however, still hold that the strategy of 2001 should be pursued. The international community has not stuck to the commitments it has made in the past. Instead of abandoning them altogether, their shortcomings and weaknesses should be analysed, weak points identified and a follow-up process be brought under way.
3. **Transitional justice:** Without justice peace is not possible. So far, those who perpetrated human rights violations during Afghanistan's wars have not been prosecuted. Some are even part of the present government or enjoy other high-ranking positions.



4. **Information and statistical sources** regarding Afghanistan are limited and often misleading. On top of that, the news media will frequently focus only on negative headlines. The record of the Afghan government and the international community should be assessed against Afghanistan's National Development Strategy (ANDS) for the last ten years; the results should be published in a report.
5. **The role of the Afghan youth**, for a long time not attracted to become involved in politics and government, is now changing. They should be offered training and support. There are over 100.000 Afghan students at universities both inside and outside Afghanistan. Many promising young people have not returned to Afghanistan or left the country because of a lack of qualified positions in administration and government. Change here is particularly slow because of the principle of seniority and the traditional Afghan respect shown towards elders. However, change is under way, and in the near future, many government positions should be in the hands of qualified younger Afghans who will be working towards good governance. A prolonged commitment to this sector is therefore crucial.
6. **Negotiations with Taliban:** The Taliban are an organised militant group that rejects democracy, human rights, civil society, dialogue, etc. Yet, the Afghan government and members of the international community are secretly negotiating with the Taliban. Many people are still haunted by memories of the Taliban regime. Nevertheless the government, via the High Council for Peace (HCP), is giving them a good name, calling them "brothers," while, at the same time, other important groups in Afghan society are pushed to the margins and discriminated against. Although the Afghan government has been welcoming towards the Taliban, inviting them to negotiate, the Taliban have called for all members of the HCP to be killed and, tragically, one member has already been assassinated. While negotiations are going on behind closed doors, the death toll of Taliban attacks during the first half of this year has been on the rise. The HCP has no defined agenda, still it is busy distributing money and releasing Taliban. The international community should not ignore these problems. Negotiations held by the international community should be transparent, and the Afghan government has to be encouraged to protect and involve, first and foremost, its own people before making commitments to those who will not commit to peace.
7. **Any acceptance of the Taliban** will mean accepting their ideology. This would abolish all developments and achievements made so far. The segment of Afghan society most worried about negotiations with the Taliban is Afghan women who rightly fear that a deal might be struck at the expense of their rights. The Taliban's mindset and the government's compromising attitude towards their ideology are already worrisome. The Taliban are not only a threat for Afghanistan but for the security of the whole world.
8. **Pro-democracy Afghans:** The opinion of those Afghans who support democracy and the international community has been ignored. If a reintegration of the Taliban is being pursued in secret and with vague goals, this will have dire consequences for the Afghan people as a whole.



In view of the current situation and the upcoming Bonn Conference of December 2011, we demand that the following issues will be considered:

- The promises and commitments the international community made to Afghan civil society in 2001 should be fulfilled
- Afghan civil society and women should be represented and involved in all national decision making processes, especially in the 2011 Bonn Conference and the political processes the Bonn conference will support; this is especially important when it comes to negotiations with the Taliban
- Adequate funds should be allocated for the support of Afghan civil society; capacity building and training programmes should continue
- To win the confidence of the people, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law should be guaranteed both by the international community and the Afghan government
- The economy should be supported by investing in the market; this is crucial to eliminate poverty and the dependency on foreign aid
- Afghan national troops should be further equipped and their capacity enhanced
- The Afghan Constitution of 2004 shall remain unchanged as it is a stable framework for the country's future, granting equal rights to all citizens
- The roots of the insurgency have to be eliminated, particularly those either located or supported from outside Afghanistan.

For four decades have we been facing misery. We do not want future generations to suffer the same – violence, insecurity, repression, exile, a life on the run. Therefore, we ask and encourage the international community – and especially the Federal Republic of Germany – to make a long-term commitment to Afghanistan. Your contribution, military and civilian, is essential to give us the chance for a peaceful and democratic future.

We remain with the best regards and the best wishes to the German people and to you as its representatives.

We, the members of the focus group discussion, hereby undersign this solemn declaration as follows:



- 1 Ms. Liah Jawad Liah  
Executive Director, Foundation for Solidarity for Justice (FSFJ)  
Cell No. 0700-247921 email: [liah\\_jawadg@yahoo.com](mailto:liah_jawadg@yahoo.com)
- 2 Mr. M. Khavary M. Khavary  
Director, Human Rights and Eradication of Violence Organization (HREVO)  
Cell No. 070-7172447 email: [mkhavary@hervo.org](mailto:mkhavary@hervo.org)
- 3 Mr. Javad Wafa Javad Wafa  
Deputy Director, Shuhada Organization (SO)  
Cell No. 0799-409544 email: [jawad.wafa@shuhada.org](mailto:jawad.wafa@shuhada.org)
- 4 Mr. Aziz Rafiee Aziz Rafiee  
Executive director, Afghan Civil Society Forum organization (ACSFo)  
Cell No. 0799-337828, 0700-277284 email: [azizr@acsf.af](mailto:azizr@acsf.af)
- 5 Mr. Timor Hakimyar Timor Hakimyar  
Director, Foundation for Culture and Civil Society (FCCS)  
Cell No. 0700-278905, 0799-243587 email: [hakimyar.t@gmail.com](mailto:hakimyar.t@gmail.com)
- 6 Ms. Hangama Anwari Hangama Anwari  
Director, Women and Children Legal Research Foundation (WCLRF)  
Cell No. 0700-076557, email: [wclrf@yahoo.com](mailto:wclrf@yahoo.com)
- 7 Ms. Wazhma Abdul Rahim Zai Wazhma Abdul Rahim Zai  
Deputy Director, Women and Children Legal Research Foundation (WCLRF)  
Cell No. 0700-076557, 0700-288504 email: [wclrf@yahoo.com](mailto:wclrf@yahoo.com)
- 8 Ms. Soraya Parluka Soraya Parluka  
Director, All Afghan Women Union (AAWU)  
Cell No. 0700-275091, 0799-357632 Email: [suraiaperlika@hotmail.com](mailto:suraiaperlika@hotmail.com)  
[speher\\_barin@hotmail.com](mailto:speher_barin@hotmail.com)
- 9 Mr. Sanjar Sohail Sanjar Sohail  
Publisher, The Daily 8 am  
Cell No. 0700-298707 email: [sanjarsohail@yahoo.com](mailto:sanjarsohail@yahoo.com)
- 10 Ms. Khorshid Nori Khorshid Nori  
Director, Afghan Women Skill Development Centre  
Cell No. 077-2782612 email: [awsdckabul@hotmail.com](mailto:awsdckabul@hotmail.com)