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66 In Islam there is absolutely no difference between women and men as far as their relationship to Allah is concerned, as both are promised the same reward for good conduct and the same punishment for evil conduct (Holy Quran). 99

List of Abbreviation

AIHRC Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission

APRP Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program

AWN Afghan Women's Network

DFAT Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DOWA Directorate of Women's Affairs

EVAW Elimination of Violence Against Women

HPC High Peace Council MOI Ministry of Interior

MOWA Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRU Monitoring and Research Unit

NAP National Action Plan

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization NGO Non-governmental Organization

OBR One Billion Rising

PPC Provincial Peace Council RRI Rapid Response Initiative

STAIDS Supporting the Afghan Women's Network Institutional Development and Stability

UNDP United Nations Development Program
UNSCR United Nations Security Council Resolution

VAW Violence Against Women

Afghan Women's Network

Annual Report 2014



Afghan Women's Network (AWN) is the cornerstone of women's rights movement – uniting and representing the growing number of women's organizations with a lead responsibility of Social and legal empowerment of women in Afghanistan since 1995. Though, since last year, AWN has expended and improved its services deliveries to women at risk both at national and sub-national levels.



Likewise in 2014 - AWN through the great coordination of our partners, the secretariat expanded, by establishing five regional offices in Kunduz, Balkh, Bamyan, Kandahar and Paktia provinces. There regional offices, in these major urban centers will operate as a hub to cover other neighboring provinces. Where all the neighboring women rights activists, institutions and individuals will work collectively under the umbrella of AWN in jointly speak out their massages and priorities at national and sub national levels. Keep the continues strategic efforts in mind, AWN would follow up on access to more women groups, committees, organizations and associations by providing opportunities of networking, capacity building and advocacy.

AWN also started the process of strategic plan, revision for the coming term. Besides, for better accountability, transparency and quality delivery, several institutional development plans were implemented such as: updating manuals(Program, Finance and monitoring) & Project Management Information System (PMIS), formation of research unit, conducting organizational & individual team members' assessments and increasing the number of staff from 35 to 95 at both managerial and technical levels. In addition, by the end of 2014, AWN had around 123 civil society member organizations focusing on women's rights and more than 3,500 individual members committed for promoting gender equality through three strategic areas: "Women Peace and Security", "Women's Legal and Social Protection" and "Women's Political Participation and Leadership".

Besides institutional advancement, AWN also increased interactions with all the relevant grassroots and political leaderships to further boost women inclusion in development. In February 2014, AWN and other civil society representatives met with the presidential candidates to discuss their commitment on women's rights and women legal empowerment. This meeting was followed by a debate in June 2014 with the two leading contending presidential candidates, where AWN and more than 100 other women's rights organizations requested the candidates to endorse a six-point petition to safeguard women's protection and further promote equal legal rights for women in the coming government after the elections. As, AWN believes in fully engaging the political leadership support to gender equality and gender mainstreaming at the center of policy and women empowerment agenda should remain at the center of planning and development to enable women enjoy their rights within an independent democratic country, which was

¹⁾ The 7 field offices will cover its neighboring provinces including Takhar, Baghlan, Badakhshan, Paktika, Logar, Khost, Daykundi, Helmand and Zabul. In addition, AWN looks forward to establish its provincial offices in all provinces of Afghanistan

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very clearly observed in the 38% of women voters.

The United Kingdom hosted NATO summit on "Afghanistan beyond 2014 after completion of withdrawal of international troops" in September 2014 played a role of international platform for women's rights awareness and protection in Afghanistan. In this summit, AWN brought number of key recommendations in terms of women's security and protection and women's participation in decision making positions within ANSF (Afghan army, police and national department of security). These recommendations were based on AWN consultation with hundreds of women across Afghanistan to discuss Afghan Women's concerns to empower women and defend their rights.

Similarly, Oslo Symposium – hosted by Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in November 2014 on "Women's Rights and Empowerment in Afghanistan" was the forum where Afghanistan's achievements and progress on women rights and empowerment over the past 14 years were discussed and the challenges for ensuring future progress were identified. The participants of the Oslo conference included the senior representatives of the Afghan government, parliament and civil society including representatives of 32 other governments, multilateral organizations and international civil society organizations discussed and agreed on contributing to women empowerment and gender mainstreaming across all governance bodies, which was also linked up in London Conference, resulting in final communiqué.

In 2014, AWN proficiently contributed as a members of 1325 National Action Plan (NAP) development in both the advisory committee and technical committees of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and UN Women with support of the Embassy of Finland. To increase civil society participation in the NAP development. AWN regularly consulted its member organizations across the country to include their views and recommendations in the NAP drafting process till the first draft was developed.

As a part of its institutional development program, Afghan Women's Network invested on its own capacity development through the support of partners. The first edition of AWN's monthly newsletter was printed in September 2014, which included information on the background of AWN, its member organisations, individual members and partners. Moreover, AWN was able to refurbish a new conference room, designed and decorated by a professional décor company.

All of the aforementioned developments are positive responses from the government and international community and show that progress towards achieving women's rights in Afghanistan is growing infinitely. Currently, Afghanistan ranks among the world's top 20 countries in terms of more women representatives in parliament, at 27 %, higher than any other Muslim country and much higher than the average of 16.4% in the region.

However, many challenges remain unsolved. From theoretical perspective – women rights and women empowerment agenda is always on front at government planning juncture (Afghanistan constitution, Afghanistan National Development Strategy and National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan, etc.), however, less efforts are undertaken in practice. For instance, Women's access to justice still remains very limited, while forced and child

marriages are still very common. As per the Ministry of Education data, the main cause of girls' school dropout is early marriages – in each one million girls 80% do not complete full school cycle up to grade 12. Access to quality health services is still limited at provincial and district levels, only 31% of pregnant women have access to skilled birth attendants, this % further drop down to 17% for Kuchi and other rural women. Similarly, domestic violence against women is still widespread.

Within the fragile women friendly society of Afghanistan, there is a significant need for sustainable support for women rights protection to assure that all women across the country live a life with dignity. Nevertheless, AWN customary committed to take the lead for women political, economical, legal and social empowerment, where Afghan women will be able to enjoy equal rights as citizens of Afghanistan. Despite limited resources, AWN plans for bigger steps to be taken to further fortify AWN commitment towards achieving institutional goals by reaching out to all 34 provinces. However, these wishes will not come true without the generous support of our national and international partners.

That is why; I would like to express my gratitude to AWN founders, core group, board, management, members, partners (national and international), and all the men and women who have assisted us to complete our mission. We always value and appreciate their openhanded support - their involvement has been crucial to achieving women's rights in a war-effected country. Finally, I want to end up with one massage of: Let's bring the policies, strategies and programs developed for women from the capitals to the districts, to the villages and to their homes to practically observe their impact in the practical lives of women.

Executive Director

Afghan Women's Network

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Ms. Hasina Safi



Afghanistan has experienced tremendous human losses since 1979 to 2001 - after the Soviet invasion and the mujahedeen resistance that followed as a reaction. Progress towards human development remained stagnant until 2001 when Taliban regime collapsed. Afghanistan had the lowest adult literacy, lowest girls' enrollment in schools and highest maternal mortality rates in the world - even by 2009, 86 % Afghans were multi-dimensionally poor. During the 3 decades of war, Afghanistan has had a devastating impact not only in terms of hundreds and thousands of lives that have been lost and millions of women, children and men that have been displaced, both internally and as refugees, but the impact of war was also seen in the aftermath in terms of institutional and infrastructural decay -Socially, Politically and Economically.

After the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, Afghanistan became ever more volatile and dangerous for its civilians in particular to women. Afghanistan society broke down in a fragile state in 1990s, when women caught in fire and became direct targets of armed groups during the civil war and remained depressed, undercover and away from development. Women in Afghanistan witnessed terrible violence of all means - thousands of women kidnapped, raped, tortured and killed.

After the fall of the Soviet backed regime in 1992 till the Taliban's takeover of power between 1995/1996 to 2001, harsh social rules and punishments based on strict interpretations of the "SHARIA" law were enforced in Afghanistan where women faced greatest burden of these harsh rules and punishments. Education for girls was prohibited and women were banned from working in public. Such extreme measures have lead the a detrimental decline in women's and children's access to health care as female health staff were stopped working in health facilities and women were not permitted to be examined by male doctors. During these years, thousands of Afghan women died due to pregnancy and childbirth complications due to lack of access to health facilities. Soon after the fall of the Taliban, the US led invasion in 2001, UNICEF stated in a press release that Afghanistan was among the worst places in the world for women's health. Record level of maternal deaths was being recorded with "almost half of all deaths among women aged 15 to 49 coming as a result of pregnancy and childbirth".

Despite constituting half the society (48.8 %) women have continuously been excluded from peace initiatives that have been conducted behind closed doors by male leaders and international actors after the successful installation of democratic government in Afghanistan. Women's concerns and inputs have not been taken into consideration, which raises concerns about women's rights being negotiable in an eventual peace process.7

With growing neglect to women rights, women empowerment and gender equality within newly established democratic government, AWN initiated a nationwide campaign since 2001 – an advocacy for women to understand

is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve equality.

Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective

July 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

their rights, entitlements to achieve evitable rights in accessing government services deliveries and decision making process through the support of international community.

These efforts, resulted significant boost to women awareness and motivation. The noteworthy progress was seen in 2014 election where women participated immensely. Similarly during 2014, AWN has continued its efforts to achieve progress towards targets set in its three strategic areas: Women's Political Participation and Leadership, Women's Inclusion in Peace and Security and Women's Legal and Social Protection.

In the process of including women in peace and security, in 2014, AWN continued to endorse women's participation and full involvement in all efforts related to peace and security in Afghanistan in. AWN is aware that women tend to be excluded from peace negotiations, despite making up half the society, and is therefore a strong advocate for women's inclusion in all forms of

peace negotiations, at the national, provincial and local levels.

By monitoring the implementation of UNSCR 1325, AWN has been in a position to conduct evidence-based advocacy for women's inclusion in the peace process at the decision-making levels, nationally and internationally. Beside advocacy, AWN also engaged in capacity building activities with Afghanistan's High Peace Council members, while also participating in the development of the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Afghanistan.

AWN believes that women's political participation is essential to building a democratic society. However, AWN is also aware that women's socio-economic empowerment is key to their increased political participation. To this end, the network has been contributing to the empowerment of women to overcome social and cultural barriers that prevent them from participating in society as equal to men.

Box 1: Success Story - PWC role in Ensuring Police-Women work in respectful workplace atmosphere

Ms. Rahila was one of the police lieutenants in Balkh province, who had the position of third lieutenant but she remained jobless for couple of months as there was no vacant position for women in the provincial police department. She spoke to the provincial police department for several months, however she did not received a job nor did the Balkh police recruitment department gave inform her about any new vacant positions available for women in the police department. After several months with no hope to find the job - Ms. Rahila approached and shared her problem in the internal coordination meeting.

² Afghanistan National Human Development Report 2009, Kabul University and United Nations Development Programme, Center for Policy and Human

Development ³ Oxfam (November 2009), *The Cost of War: Afghan Experiences of Conflict, 1978-2009*, available at:

http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/afghanistan-the-cost-of-war.pdf

Physicians for Human Rights (1998), The Taliban's War on Women – A Health and Human Rights Crisis in Afghanistan, available at:

https://www.law.georgetown.edu/rossrights/docs/reports/taliban.pdf
5 UNICEF (November 2002), available at: http://www.unicef.org/newsline/02pr59afghanmm.htm

⁶ Afghanistan CSO population data (1391 – 2011/12)

Oxfam (November 2014), Behind Closed Doors – The risk of denying women a voice in Afghanistan's future, available at: http://www.oxfam.org/en/research/behind-closed-doors



Ms. Habiba and Ms. Nahid (head of profession committee) assured her to initiate follow up with provincial police department on her behalf. The leadership of the PWC Ms. Habiba and Ms. Nahid discussed the complaint of Ms. Rahila with Ms. Najiba (head of human resource department) and Ms. Zainab (AWN focal point for Balkh province) in coordination meeting. Ms. Najiba and Ms. Zainab communicated the

complaint with Mr. Abdul Haq Saifi (the head of police recruitment department of Blakh) and shared the complaint of Ms. Rahila. The PWC delegation discussed the eligibility criteria of the position and capacity of Ms. Rahila as a suitable candidate for the position. After having long discussions Mr. Saifi was convinced and he promised to find a vacant position of third lieutenant for Ms. Rahila.

The delegation follow upped the case after three weeks, Ms. Habiba, Ms. Nahid and Ms. Zainab visited Balkh province police department office and observed that Ms. Rahila had already received the position of third lieutenant in one of the Chintal district of Balkh province. The PWC delegation reported back to recruitment department and expressed their satisfaction and appreciated the coordination and support from the police department for acknowledging women rights.

During 2014, this support was mainly achieved through the facilitation of trainings, networking and lobbying activities. One of the key achievements of AWN in the field of women's political participation was its nationwide "Our Vote Our Destiny" campaign, which is believed to have contributed to the high female voter turnout that was viewed during the presidential and provincial council elections in April 2014.

Through legal and social protection activities, AWN and its members concentrated on women's rights in family affairs. For example, the rapid response to violence against women cases has been developed and implemented, which has helped increasing women's access to legal protection and advice. Moreover, AWN has actively monitored the implementation of the EVAW law throughout the year, while also facilitated capacity building workshops for EVAW law implementers to improve their knowledge about the law. AWN also implemented awareness raising initiatives in the communities while conducted advocacy and lobbying to influence decisions in favor of women's rights.

AWN's Institutional Development & New Initiatives - 2014

Establishing Monitoring and Research Unit (MRU)

In January 2014, AWN established a new unit "Monitoring and Research Unit" (MRU) in head office Kabul. The 3

key deliverables of this unit for the year 2014 are 1) the Monitoring the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Afghanistan. The UNSCR 1325 monitoring report was drafted based on information collected through a research – conducted in all 34 provinces. 2) Women's Political Participation research study to understand the challenges faced by Afghan Women legislators and political decision-makers in the government. 3) A research study conducted to evaluate the implementation of the



Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program to understand the concerns of Afghan Women regarding the peace and reintegration process in the country.



The Launch of Advocacy Coalition Teams

In September, AWN launched its advocacy coalition teams in 7 provinces: Kunduz, Nangarhar, Heart, Kandahar, Balkh, Bamyan and Paktia. The advocacy coalition teams work closely with community-based women's rights organizations and governmental institutions including department of women affairs (DOWA), the justice sector, courts, AIHRC and PPCs to identify and follow up on the cases of violence against women. In addition, the advocacy coalition teams play a key role in increasing number of women in PPCs and providing awareness to understand their legal, social and

⁸ The launch of the advocacy coalition team in Jalalabad was inaugurated by the Deputy Governor in presence of the key stakeholders - the head of Directorate for Women's Affairs (DOWA), the head of AIHRC, Provincial Peace Council (PPC) and media representatives, Civil society organizations in Nangarhar and AWN's advocacy coalition teams from Nooristan, Laghman and Kunar. Similar opening ceremonies took place in Herat, Paktia, Kunduz, Nangas check Vendelbeer and Pennyue.

political protection. The key motive behind the launch of the Advocacy Coalition Teams was to further improve the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Process (APRP) efforts in the provinces.

Establishment of Resource Centers in Provinces

In 2014, AWN is in the effort of establishment of 5 resource centres in Kabul, Nangarhar, Paktia, Kunduz and Herat provinces for the purpose of easy access to information. In each province a "login system" are in the process of development for each of the centres. These login systems provide online accounts and passwords to different users to access the information (advocacy, legal, and economic empowerment). The resource centres shall allow the users to upload and download online information, while linking the online uploaded data with AWN's official website. All records related to users are stored in the computers and all material including hard copies and books have been

tagged and entered into the system as a catalogue to help and enrich educational skills of the community based women

AWN Monthly Newsletters:

In 2014, AWN has started to issue monthly newsletters; the first newsletter was printed on 24th of September 2014, as a part of a general capacity building project "Supporting Afghan Women's Network Institutional Development and Stability" (STAIDS). The first 500 printed copies of the newsletter were distributed to AWN's member organisations and individuals in Kabul and provinces. They were also widely shared with donors and partners.



9 Moreover in late 2014 in a meeting - Mr. Masoum Stanikzai (the joint secretariat of HPC) accepted AWN suggestions to further increase the number of women in PPCs and HPCs. He further requested from AWN to provide CVs of courageous, passionate and professional women to become the members of



Women's Inclusion In Peace And Security



During 2014, AWN also built a stronger relationship with the High Peace Council and its provincial peace councils.

Since international actors and the Afghan government initiated numerous peace initiatives, such as the Saudi Initiative (2007), the peace talks in the Maldives (2010), The Chantilly talks in France (2011-2012) and the recent Qatar process (2012-2013) - none of the peace initiatives have been included women involvement remarkably. Likewise, the establishment of the High Peace Council (HPC) as a part of national peace process with financial and technical support from UNDP in

June 2010 to lead the peace negotiations with Taliban and implement the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP). Even though, in APRP, only 9 of the member are female out of total 70 members. Moreover, the civil society members and women's activists also consider the role of female members of the HPC as symbolic rather than having a true impact on the peace process.¹²

Corresponding to AWN's strategy to increase women participation in Afghanistan peace process - AWN carried out several initiatives in 2014. For instance, AWN has been monitoring the implementation of UNSCR 1325 since 2011. In 2014, AWN carried out another monitoring round in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. This monitoring was carried out through a comprehensive monitoring based questionnaire – used in previous rounds of monitoring. The research methodology was mostly qualitative and the interviews were conducted with governmental and non-governmental organizations across the country. The Afghanistan report produced by AWN is part of a global report published internationally in November 2014.

¹⁰ Wormer, Nils (December 2012), Exploratory Talks and Peace Initiatives in Afghanistan, available at: http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publications/swpcomments-en/swp-aktuelle-details/article/afghanistan_friedensinitiativen.html and Oxfam (November 2014), Behind Closed Doors – The risk of denying women a voice in Afghanistan's future, available at: http://www.oxfam.org/en/research/behind-closed-doors

¹¹ UNDP (2013), Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme 2013 Annual Project Progress Report, available at: http://www.af.undp.org/content/dam/afghanistan/docs/crisisprev/APRP/APRP-APR-2013.pdf

During 2014, AWN has also built a stronger relationship with the High Peace Council and its provincial peace councils. This has been achieved mainly through joint advocacy efforts with member organizations. At the provincial level, AWN and its member organizations have convinced provincial peace councils to allow 7 women with relevant backgrounds in peace building to participate in the work of the councils as volunteers. AWN also provided capacity building trainings through two rounds of workshops on peace and conflict resolution for 24 women in the provinces. As a result of these workshops, the 24 women are now promoting peace building process in their respective communities. In addition, AWN has conducted awareness-raising activities about UNSCR-1325 in 28 provinces of Afghanistan. In addition, besides monitoring the implementation of the UNSCR 1325, AWN also conducted a study to evaluate the implementation of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) and its gender policy to understand that to what extent the Afghan women and men are aware of the APRP and its gender policy and to understand that how women in the communities are included in the APRP.

Data collection for the research on APRP's implementation was carried out in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. Interviews were conducted between August and October 2014 with Afghan women and men in the communities, community leaders, professionals and representatives of governmental as well as non-governmental organizations. Through this research, AWN demonstrated the involvement of women in the reintegration process both at national and subsequently at sub-national levels.



In 2014, AWN held a National Conference for drafting Afghan women's position paper for the London Conference on Afghanistan that was held in November 2014. Over 100 women participated in the consultative process in Kabul and surrounding provinces to present Afghan women's views and needs through the position paper. The position papers recommended solutions in 8 critical areas: 1) good governance; 2) peace and security; 3) access to justice; 4) political participation; 5) economic development; 6) healthcare; 7) education; and 8) donor support for the government of Afghanistan.

Box2: Success Stories – Police Women Council role in Ensuring Police-Women work in respectful workplace atmosphere

A Lieutenant rank police-women was forced to work as office cleaner in one of the police stations for several years. Her supervisor forced her to sweep the floor instead of performing her duty as a police lieutenant. She reported her complaint at Police Women Council meeting. Initially she was reluctant to share her complaint, while she came to WPC internal coordination meetings on monthly basis she understood that WPC is more suitable platform for her to share her complaint and get it resolved.



The PWC decided to initiate follow up with the Provincial Chief and head of human rights of Police department. First

the PCOP was resistant to the issue but the delegation insisted to convince the PCOP that the police-woman has the appropriate qualification to perform her duties as a Lieutenant as per the police law that regulates assignments. The PCOP agreed and ordered the supervisor to appoint the police-women as lieutenant.

The PWC delegation follow upped the case by visiting the police-woman at her duty station and asked her during internal coordination meetings on regular basis. The PWC members (Ms. Habiba, Ms. Fatana and Ms. Alia) visited the office of police-women twice to see if she is performing her duties without any pressures from the fellow police officers including her supervisor. The PWC members reported that she is now happy with her new position in respectful workplace atmosphere. The PWC delegation reported this case to Human Rights, Women's Affairs and Child Rights Directorates and appreciated the coordination and support of the PCOP.

The position paper briefly identified some of the existing challenges and proposed applicable recommendations. Some of the key challenges discussed in the position paper were 1) the passive response of Ministry of Interior and Defense to implement and report on the recommendations of the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan 2) Exclusion of community consultations in recruiting process of Afghan National Security Forces including Afghan Local Police (ALP) and 3) Unequal funds allocation within security sector—annually, hug amount of aid is being allocated to support women in security sector however, there are no clear implementation plans, no consultation with women's groups and organization.

Throughout Afghanistan, both ANSF including ALP members committed severe human rights violations and are accused for crimes such as rape, murder, tortures and misuses of power. There is little information available on the women's recruitment in Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan National Army (ANA) that how women are encouraged to join ANP and ANA and what is the current % of Afghan women in these two ministries. Despite of commitments made in international platforms such as Chicago NATO Summit (2012) to support ANSF through trainings and technical support beyond 2014, there is very little information available on how women in ANSF will be supported and integrated in policy priorities. Moreover, inclusion of human and women rights education is

¹³ The APRP is a program, which aims to win over the insurgents by helping them to reintegrate into the Afghan society. It also strives to help the reintegrated insurgents renounce violence.

significant to help the new recruits of ANP and ANA to be responsive to women victims of violence and discriminations – yet, the process is very slow.

While Afghan government has committed to international human rights laws and resolutions. In this regards, Afghan Foreign Ministry is responsible to facilitate the process of development of National Action Plan (NAP) and implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. However, the lengthy process of developing NAP and lack of NAP is a huge gap to address important challenges of women. As a result, women in most parts of the country are facing security challenges. Women within parliament, ANSF and civil society are being threaten and eventually attacked and in many of the cases, women have lost their lives due to lack of appropriate security mechanisms.

Afghan Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense should be supported and encouraged to establish close collaboration and coordination mechanism to discuss the needs of women in the security forces and seek necessary assistance where possible to ensure information sharing and accountability on recruitment of women into security forces and assigning right jobs to them. Afghan government to support the capacity development of the Afghan National Security Forces to pay greater focus on civil policing, community policing, human rights, UNSCR 1325 and women rights trainings.

Afghan government should establish an Independent Civil Society Oversight Commission to thoroughly monitor the implementation of existing gender strategies such as ANDS, NAPWA and the upcoming National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security to increase accountability and transparency. The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security requires serious focus from the Afghan government for finalization and implementation of the plan. The NAP implementation is directly related to the active participation and engagement of women and success of peace and security process in Afghanistan and its implementation must be prioritized. The International Community should to support establishment of a protection mechanism for Women Human Rights Defenders using the EU Guidelines and the commitments they have made under their National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. The consideration of these recommendations will assure greater boost to women inclusion in peace and security process.

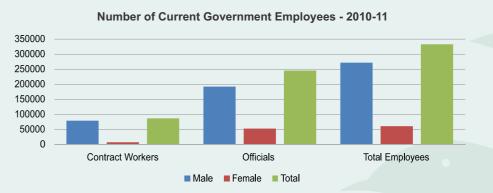
Information sharing through media helped women to understand their legal rights and to increase their knowledge about who to approach if exposed to violence

Women's Legal And Social Protection

Progress in women's awareness and access to their legal rights has improved relatively well, considering women's limited access to justice than a decade ago. Awareness raising initiatives by civil society organizations have been proven fruitful in spreading knowledge among communities in the rural as well as urban areas of the country. However, there are still many challenges that prevent women from accessing justice.

One of the major obstacles in preventing women access to justice is the social and cultural censures of Afghan society that prohibit external interventions in the family's internal household affairs. Within many Afghan families, women face the challenge of forced marriages - yet, common in all provinces of Afghanistan. In all over the country, women are treated unequally and less value is placed on their lives in terms of education, health and their social & legal protection because of their gender. Within the households, women and girls face discrimination in sharing food and clothing. In almost every household in Afghanistan son is preferred over daughter.

On the other hand, at the institutional levels unequal pay and very limited % of women representatives in both government and private sectors exists. Only 24% government employees are women in Afghanistan.¹⁵



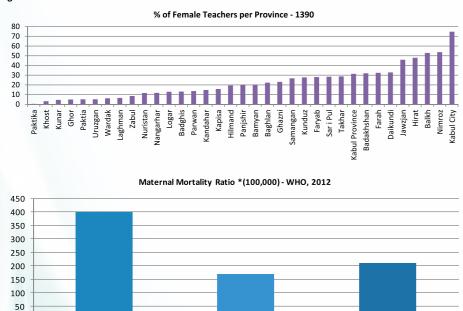
Moreover, in terms of access to public services, such as education and health care – women are more vulnerable compare to men. In education sector - only 5 provinces have equal number of female and male teachers. In 15 of the 34 provinces, on average 10 % teachers are female.

¹⁴ USIP (July 2014), Women's Access to Justice in Afghanistan, Individual Versus Community Barriers to Justice, available at http://www.usip.org/publications/womens-access-justice-in-afghanistan
¹⁵ Calculated as per CSO data – 2011/12

Global Average

19

Afghanistan



During 2014, AWN organized a media campaign to raise awareness about women's legal and social rights. Legislative information messages were broadcasted through various radio channels. This media campaign helped women to understand their legal rights and to increase their knowledge about who to approach if exposed to violence. Moreover, a contract was signed with a media production company to further increase women's awareness to understand their legal rights within Afghan law. Through this contract, a memorandum of understanding was signed with a media production company which has been producing the informative messages about women's rights at the community levels through radio spots on popular radio channels. These messages include about women education, women's right to inheritance, marriage laws and women social participation in accordance with the Afghan constitution and civil laws.

Regional Average

¹⁶ Radio Watandar and radio Ariana



In 2014, AWN completed the 3rd and 4th phases of "Monitoring of the Implementation of the EVAW law" project. The aim of the monitoring of the project was to address an existing research gap about how practitioners such as law enforcement, Ministry of Justice (MOJ) officials, prosecutors and judges understand, consider and perceive the EVAW law. The research focused on three rural districts of Kabul province that were visited four times in 2013 and 2014. Through this monitoring project, AWN informed civil society organization and the international community about the recent status of EVAW law implementation within district levels.

Moreover, AWN organized several capacity building workshops on the content and implementation of the EVAW law with a total of 120 government officials such as, the Family Response Units, Ministry of Interior, Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Justice. In addition, AWN provided a short course on the SHARI'A law to 25 lawyers that actively work as women's rights defenders. The course was held by a prominent Afghan scholar. To further encourage the SHARI'A law expertise among women's rights activists in Afghanistan, AWN organized another SHARI'A law training for 20 Afghan women activists in Delhi, India to transfer in-depth knowledge about women's rights according to Islamic principles. This training was facilitated with the technical assistance of MUSAWAH.¹⁷



AWN's Rapid Response Initiative (RRI) unit was established in May 2012 which regularly provides legal and social protection services - mainly focusing on providing legal aid through AWN's member organizations. The RRI improve women's access to their rights and justice. This unit has recorded and managed over 906 cases of emergency violence against women (VAW) since its establishment. According to the procedure of RRI, all VAW cases reported to this unit are referred to relevant members that offer legal aid services, conduct advocacy at the national level and that follow up with cases that have been referred to the justice officials.

During April 2014, the department started a new project called "Hotline Service 3434". AWN signed a MoU with MOWA to initiate the 3434 hotline services. The MoU was considered necessary to establish strong coordination and cooperation with MOWA – AWN introduced a committed focal point MOWA to monitor and evaluate the project. Together with a consultation service, the unit also continues to refer the cases to relevant inter-departmental discussions and mediation. The Hotline Service currently has 21 focal points to assist women in the provinces through providing legal suggestions and coordinating applicants with the legal consultants.

¹⁷ MUSAWAH, which means equality in Arabic language - is a global movement for equality and justice in the Muslim world

Since April 2014, the Hotline has recorded and managed total of 55 VAW cases. The recorded cases are as follows:

Table 1: Number of Cases recorded and Managed at PRI		
Murder	23	
Kidnapping	3	
Suicide	2	
Divorce	4	
Beating	5	
Rape	10	
Runaway	1	
Forced Marriage	1	
Family Cases	4	
Prevention from Accessing Education	2	
Total	55	



In addition, AWN organized "One Billion Rising" (OBR) activities in 2014, joining a global campaign against violence against women. During the OBR day, AWN managed to gather a total of 1,000 participants that marched in solidarity. One Billion Rising is a global campaign to end violence against women and promote gender equality globally.

Moreover, AWN designed a project of

empowering women and communities to eliminate violence against women to cover the rights of women and lead them to resolve their concerns through their potential capacities. Through this project, AWN accomplished series of activities to effectively achieve the objectives of the project. The project was designed to improve knowledge, build the capacity and to deliver preeminent services to female members of the communities, AWN intend to develop pictographic manual and arranged trainings for the rural women to understand the SHARI'A law and its implications in their cultural values. AWN also strengthened the knowledge of women's rights from Islamic perspectives and enhanced the access of women to predictable justice. AWN developed a REFLECT facilitators team of 200 members to generate discussions on women rights awareness and mobilization and piloted a training in Balkh, Jawzjan, Bamyan and Herat to train the REFLECT facilitators – how to properly use the toolkit.

The Legal Aid Bureau Project (LAB) financially supported by Global Rights with main purpose to increase women access to justice and to benefit Afghan families with fundamental legal rights. As, Afghanistan is affected by war since last many decades, where both men and women are affected and had sacrifices.

Through LAB project, the defense lawyers had been conducted dozens of families' cases into all levels of courts and defended many family cases through female and male defense lawyers - cases including violence, beating, divorce, engagement resolution, separation due to harm, separation due to absence etc. Although, this project was implemented for the family violation's victims and for poor victims who has no enough money to handle their case in the formal justice courts - all LAB project services are free to victims and their families throughout the country. 19

So far, through LAB project, more than 1,000 families' cases were handled by both female and male defense lawyers in different courts. Out of all these cases 84% victims were female and the remaining segment was men. LAB project had also provided more than 1,500 legal consultations to referred applicants and all focused on family aspect. Apart from this, number of applicants cases, which had no family aspects and had criminal facets received consultations and directions according to the laws and were then referred to other Legal Aid Organizations for further assistance. LAB Project also organized monthly consultation meetings attended by government and non-government legal and justice organizations, Legal Aid Organizations, NGOs, Human Rights agent, UNAMA agent, International Legal Assistance Organizations and other related institutions to share their monthly activities in the light of legal terms. They also have been shared their suggestions, views and recommendations to make and size up good coordination to promote and bring high services to the rule of law, women rights, rights of citizens and access to justice.

Since the establishment of LAB project in Nangarhar provinces, AWN provided 27 huge meetings at university, DOWA and other places, in each meeting more than 100 female and male participated. The total direct beneficiaries were 2,700 and indirectly 27,000 female and male. All of the direct and indirect beneficiaries were provided civic education to accomplish the project goal - bringing positive change in the lives of women.

Panel code:

Based on the declared articicle 26 of panel code, from ministry of justice in reference to witness of family relatives if that is women, can not be accepted, on this account, AWN also projected justifications to Ministry of Justice and parliament to bring amendment to article 26 of penal code through on air roundtable discussions with MoJ and Supreme Court. However, despite all efforts of AWN, the MoJ TAQNEEN resisted and ignored the propsed suggestions of AWN. Nevertheless, AWN continued its efforts and initiated peaceful demonstration and submitted letter for article amendemnt to the Afghanistan president Hamid Karzai. Fortunately, president welcomed the suggestion and ordered MoJ to incorporate AWN logical recommendations and act accordingly. Finally the suggestions were incorporated to article 26 of penal code and the amended article was published in JARIDA Rasmi.20

- ²⁰ Forbiddance of Questioning a Witness Article 26: The following people cannot be questioned as witnesses:

 - Relatives of the accused person
 Legal advisor, physician, expert, psychiatrist or journalist who is obligated to keep confidential information obtained during their duty, contact with their clients or reporters, unless their responsibility is relieved by the cour
 A non-discenting child who has not reached the age of seven years

The judicial police officer, prosecutor's office and court are obligated to inform the individuals set forth in paragraph (1) of this article of their right not to answer questions In cases where reasons exist that deem the testimony to be critical to confirm the criminality or innocence of the suspect or accused person or its social benefits are greater than keeping its confidentiality, the court based on the request of either one of the parties can relieve professional liability of the persons set forth in subparagraph 5 of paragraph (1) of this article. In this case the court shall hear the statement of the witness

¹⁸ Project staff recruitment, developing pictorial manual, proactive coordination meetings with relevant ministries, developing toolkit for the trainees, printing toolkit, translation of manual and conducting training session in 4 provinces of Afghanistan.

¹⁹ The Afghanistan constitution second chapter was named "Fundamental Rights of Citizens". According to this chapter, each Afghan has the right to drive her /his cases via defense lawyer in Courts. Based on article 31 of the Constitution, each Afghan citizen may have the right to refuse invalid accusations from other individuals and meanwhile could either file her/his case on accused individual or also have the right to take legal advices from a defense lawyer.

AWN facilitated the celebration of the global event "One Billion Rising" (OBR) in Afghanistan by gathering around 1,000 participants to march together for ending violence against women in Afghanistan. AWN and its partner organizations also represented the Afghan women during two key political events in 2014 Oslo Symposium on "Women's Rights and Empowerment in Afghanistan" and the "London Conference on Afghanistan" through which AWN was able to present its recommendations to improve women's rights in Afghanistan and to share the priorities of Afghan women in the coming transformation decade (2015-2024).





AWN facilitated consultation meetings with more than 500 women activists across 8 regions of Afghanistan to collect the perspectives and feedback from women's rights representatives in response to the NATO Summit of September 2014. As a product of the consultations with members of women's rights organizations, AWN developed a list of recommendations for the government of Afghanistan and the

international community on how to secure women's rights and protection as the security transition is coming to an end. The recommendations also addressed questions regarding women political participation in the Afghan security

sector reforms. At the national level, more than 100 governmental decision-makers, NATO officials and media representatives were present at a conference organized by AWN to share their recommendations publically.



Women's Political Participation And Leadership

In the past decade, women's participation in politics and in the government has increased significantly. Presently, female members of parliament occupy 68 out of 249 (28%) seats of the lower house of the parliament, while 28 women are present in the upper house. Afghanistan has the highest average of women

parliamentarians in the region, highest in all Muslims countries and ranks among the world's top 20 countries in terms of the number of women representatives in parliament.

The 2014 presidential elections marked the first peaceful political transition in Afghanistan's history as a nation. Compared to the previous elections in 2009, the voter turnout was notably higher in 2014. According to Independent Electoral Commission, female voter turnout was 34% in April during the first round of elections. A similar result was achieved in the run-off election that took place in June. Helping women to access decision-making positions in the governance structures is essential to influencing policy towards more gender sensitive and representative line. 22



Prior to the elections in April 2014, AWN met with 9 of the presidential candidates to discuss women's situation and requested their commitment to support women's rights activism in Afghanistan if any of them are elected as president of Afghanistan. Furthermore, the candidates were asked to maintain the issues regarding women's rights on their respective agendas during their whole respective campaigns.

In particular, the

convince women

to cast their votes

and to get involved

in the elections and

the political process

target was to

Afghan Women's Network played a key role in mobilizing women across all regions of Afghanistan to participate

equitably in Afghan presidential elections of 2014 through "Civic Education with Focus on Electoral Participation" project. AWN informed Afghan women about their political, social and civic rights and persuaded women to participate in the 2014 Presidential Elections. These efforts and responses included Citizenship and Civic Education, Workshops in 28 provinces and 84 districts of Afghanistan, Community awareness Campaigns and Media Campaigns, which lasted until the elections held on April 5, 2014.

²¹ BBC (April 6, 2014), Afghanistan presidential poll hailed as a 'success', available at: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26908464 and BBC (June 14, 2014)

Afghan election: Run-off vote held amid violence, available at: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27844674
²² The Asia Foundation (September 18, 2013), As Election Nears in Afghanistan, Women's Participation is Critical, available at: <a href="http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2013/09/18/as-election-nears-in-afghanistan-womens-noblitical-narticination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-is-critical-in-articination-

The "Civic Education with Focus on Electoral Participation" project raised the awareness of Afghan women about their political, social & civic rights and persuaded women to participate in the 2014 Presidential Elections - through awareness efforts, AWN played a key role in mobilizing women to participate in the elections and determine the future of Afghanistan. Furthermore, AWN succeeded to sign a six-point petition signed by to the two final presidential candidates Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and Dr. Ashraf Ghani June 2014.

Through these projects, AWN increased public awareness at the grass root level about the importance of women's political participation, mainly, convincing women to cast their votes as voters and to get involved in the elections and the political process as representatives. AWN helped hundreds of thousands of Afghan women to register as voters, and to obtain their voting cards. The activities of the project were carried out by local implementing partners under the supervision of AWN's central Program Management Office in Kabul.



For the second round of the presidential elections, AWN launched its campaign"Our Vote our Destiny". Which included radio TV spots, billboards messages and community dialogues in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. The key objective of this campaign was to explain to Afghan women that their votes are important and the electoral participation is the cornerstone of any democratic process. The messages were communicated through TV advertisements, posters and public events at the grassroots level and reached out to hundreds of thousands of Afghan women and men. The media spots mainly focused on the traditional and cultural aspects of every region and were linked to women's political participation. This approach was used to encourage women's participation in the 2014 presidential and provincial council election. AWN also focused on raising awareness through community meetings in all provinces.

Moreover, AWN developed two TV spots and broadcasted various radio and private channels to cover the entire election process throughout the country. Simultaneously, 8 different types of posters with relevant messages targeting both educated and uneducated women - AWN distributed 12,800 posters to AWN's partners in all over Afghanistan, The process of the broadcasting were reviewed by an internal committee.

During the Elections, AWN assigned 1,000 observers in 28 provinces of Afghanistan. The observers reported to the Independent Election Commission (IEC) throughout the entire election process, provided situation updates, including when there was a shortage of ballot papers. The IEC was responsive to the messages they received and solved issues raised by the observers accordingly. In addition, as a result of this project, total of 25,150 women were mobilized and encouraged 8,497 women to get register and obtain voting cards.



In June 2014, AWN developed a six-point petition, which was presented to the two final presidential candidates Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and Dr. Ashraf Ghani. Both candidates signed the petition on June 12, 2014 – two days before the second round of elections the Petition was developed based on consultations with Afghan women groups and activists as part of Women Vision 2024 - addressing 6 key policy areas and 30 recommendations in the areas of education, health, political leadership, access to justice, peace & security and economy. Both candidates agreed on the implementation of the existing policies and laws including the EVAW law, the National Action Plan for Women



(NAPWA) and other commitments that Afghanistan has agreed on in international conferences. The signing of the petition by the two presidential candidates indicated a strong commitment to enforce a gender sensitive national policy in the upcoming years by the elected president.

Additionally, a follow up meeting was held with President Ashraf Ghani after his appointment as the new president of Afghanistan in 2014. During this meeting, AWN requested the help of president to establish women's advisory board. The members of this board will be selected through consultation meetings across 8 regions where AWN operates through concerned partners to nominate women for a new advisory board. During these meeting, CVs were collected and 20 women were shortlisted for the Women's Advisory Board to advise the president on women's needs and concerns in Afghanistan.

On March 8, 2014, the international women's day - AWN launched "Women Vision 2024" paper. The paper was developed through consultation meetings of leading women's rights activists and organizations in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. Afghan women have documented their collective achievements, which they have realized over the past 13 years. The "Women Vision 2024" paper also outlines a vision for the future of Afghan women beyond 2014.

In 2014, AWN initiated a research project "Women's Political Participation in Afghanistan". The objective of the study was to understand the challenges faced by Afghan women legislators and political decision-makers in the government. Through this study, total of 2016 women and 274 men from different socio-economic and professional backgrounds were interviewed between September and November 2014, across eighteen provinces in Afghanistan. The key findings of the study includes 1) Experiences of female legislators regarding their struggle to maintain a cohesive position in the parliament when promoting women's rights, 2) Female managers at the ministries feel marginalized in their work environment by their male peers, and the political priorities of these women as perceived by the population and 3)Most commonly perceived priorities among female legislators, which were identified as their desire to represent women in public office and to defend women's rights

Conclusion

Afghan Women's Network had the pleasure of implementing numerous valuable projects during 2014 - was able to invest in its own capacity & institutional development and adequately expended its activities from the national levels to sub-national level to reach more susceptible women at the countryside. This strategic move resulted in attaining innovative programmes by expending AWN institutional structure.

For example, the launch of the AWN's monthly newsletters as additional advocacy and information sharing tool and the formation of Monitoring and Research Unit (MRU) in 2014 -the goal was to produce evidence based policy and advocacy to strengthen the analytical capacity of AWN members and partners. Primarily, the obligation of MRU is to monitor and implement UNSCR 1325 report in all 34 provinces and consequently, its function is performing various types of thematic research studies to produce evidence based policy recommendations to underlying challenges to women empowerment in Afghanistan.

Similarly, there are number of other events and initiatives that took place in 2014 (the lunch of advocacy coalition teams, establishment of resource centers, One Billion Rising campaign, public awareness and media campaigns, Civic education, amendment in women SHEHADAT law, and participation in Oslo Symposium & Landon conference) mainly aimed to promote gender equality through three strategic areas: "women peace and security", "women's legal and social protection" and "women's political participation and leadership" by providing steering services to more women. As a result, AWN updated the 5 years strategic plan and increased interactions with key political leaderships to further boost women inclusion in development to assure their commitment to women's rights and women legal empowerment by signing a six-point petition by the president.

Besides all above mentioned efforts, there is a significant need for additional technical and financial continues support for women rights protection and women empowerment by the Afghan government and international community. Because, until now, the women of Afghanistan continue to face exclusion from important decision-making, peace building processes and the implementation of the EVAW law is still facing major challenges. Furthermore, In Afghanistan, there are great inconsistencies between customary law, civil law and Islamic Law, as well as the informal justice system, which tends to grant women even less rights - women face constitutional equality but legal inequality.

To this end, the Afghan government must ensure the recognition of the NAP on UNSCR 1325 and mainstreaming the NAPWA across all government ministries to make sure that women are not marginalized in planning and development. In addition, permit women to offer their input in particular to gender responsive budgeting and to make sure that women monitor the spending of at least 30% of the annual budget on women empowerment. Because, the current political settings in Afghanistan and the drawdown of international forces including potential decrease in foreign aid for Afghanistan – it should be the prime goal for the afghan government and international community to provide additional financial and technical support and provide equal opportunities for women empowerment across the country.

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Annex A:

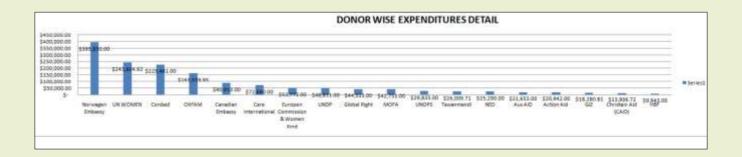
Donors that have funded AWN's projects throughout the year 2014 are as follows (in alphabetical order):



Action Aid	HBF
AusAID	MOFA
Canadian Embassy	NED
Care International	Norwegian Embass
Christain Aid (CAID)	OXFAM
Cordaid	Tawanmandi
European Commission & Women Kind	UN WOMEN
GIZ	UNDP
Global Right	UNOPS

DONOR WISE EXPENDITURES DETAIL

S/N	Donor		EXPENDITURESS FROM 21-DECEMBER-2013 TILL 31-OCTOBER-2014	EXPENDITURES PERCENTAGE
1	Norwagen Embassy	\$	395,850.00	25.51%
2	UN WOMEN	\$	243,804.92	15.71%
3	Cordaid		229,461.00	14.79%
4	OXFAM	\$ \$	163,559.95	10.54%
5	Canadian Embassy	\$	90,913.00	5.86%
6	Care International	\$	72,660.00	4.68%
7	Europen Commission & Women Kind	\$	53,772.00	3.47%
8	UNDP	\$	48,811.00	3.15%
9	Global Right	\$	44,311.00	2.86%
10	MOFA	\$	42,751.00	2.76%
11	UNOPS	\$	29,835.00	1.92%
12	Tawanmandi	\$ \$ \$	26,009.71	1.68%
13	NED	\$	25,290.00	1.63%
14	Aus AID	\$	21,653.00	1.40%
15	Action Aid	\$ \$	20,942.00	1.35%
16	GIZ	\$	18,280.81	1.18%
17	Christain Aid (CAID)	\$	13,906.72	0.90%
18	HBF	\$	9,943.00	0.64%
	GRAND TOTAL	\$	1,551,754	100.00%



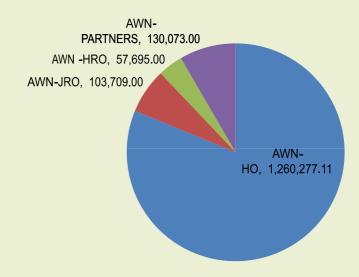
DONOR WISE RECEIPT DETAIL

S/N	Donor	RECEIPTS FROM 11-DECEMBER-2013 TILL 31-OCTOBER-2014	RECEIPPTS PERCENTAGE
1	Aus AID	\$ 361,745.00	20.58%
2	UN WOMEN	\$ 229,779.92	13.07%
3	OXFAM	\$ 227,733.33	12.95%
4	Cordaid	\$ 223,218.00	12.70%
5	Norwagen Embassy	\$ 156,248.00	8.89%
6	Care International	\$ 109,104.00	6.21%
7	Tawanmandi	\$ 104,602.00	5.95%
8	Canadian Embassy	\$ 89,268.00	5.08%
9	Europen Commission & Women Kind	\$ 73,459.00	4.18%
10	UNDP	\$ 47,920.00	2.73%
11	UNOPS	\$ 32,303.00	1.84%
12	Global Right	\$ 27,895.00	1.59%
13	Action Aid	\$ 23,790.00	1.35%
14	NED	\$ 20,600.00	1.17%
15	MOFA	\$ 18,650.00	1.06%
16	HBF	\$ 9,943.00	0.57%
17	GIZ	\$ 1,800.00	0.10%
18	Christain Aid (CAID)	\$ -	0.00%
	GRAND TOTAL	\$ 1,758,058	100.00%



AWN AND IT'S PARTNERS EXPENDITURES DETAIL

S/N	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT IN USD	PERCENTAGE
1	AWN-HO	1,260,277.11	81.22
2	AWN-JRO	103,709.00	6.68
3	AWN-HRO	57,695.00	3.72
4	AWN-PARTNERS	130,073.00	8.38
	TOTAL	1,551,754.11	100.00



AWN International Advocacy

