

*From Documents to Implementation*

*Afghan Women's Network First Monitoring Report on  
Implementation of Afghanistan National Action Plan  
(NAP) UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*

*July 2016*

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## Acronyms

AWN	Afghan Women's Network
AWSDC	Afghan Women's Skills Development Center
AWEC	Afghan Women Education Center
AWRO	Afghan Women Rights Organization
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MoD	Ministry of Defense
Mol	Ministry of Interior
NDS	National Security Directorate
DoWA	Department of Women's Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VAW	Violence against Women

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We want to appreciate, in a special way, the financial contribution of our partners Cordaid without whom this first monitoring report development would not have been possible.

## I. Women, peace and security profile

### A. Nature of the Conflict and its impact on Women

Afghanistan became an independent country in the year 1919. The country has experienced various regimes with their own specific approaches and ideologies towards leading the country and people. Women have significantly suffered from all these approaches and ideologies finding themselves between practicing democracy and being seriously subjected to religious and traditional beliefs. The contradictions between the reality of Afghanistan's diversity between people in urban and rural areas and the approach of different regimes have mostly had been challenging for women. It is important to reflect about Afghanistan's history and women rather than before or after specific regimes when discussing women's life in the country<sup>1</sup>.

Women's participation and contribution has been defined differently throughout the history. The first ever efforts to encourage women's participation and contribution in different spheres including politics started in 1920 which included Afghanistan King's own female family members. Constitutional rights and obligations to making government more responsible towards women's political participation, leadership and education were the effort that is documented repeatedly during the 1920s-1980s eras.

Three decades of war have had a major back clash in the life of Afghan people from various prospective such as education, health, justice, politics, leadership and human capacity. The overall impacts of war have majorly weakened the social and cultural norms. The civil war has seriously damaged the infrastructure systems taking into consideration the need for equal participation and contribution<sup>2</sup>.

Women suffered throughout the war and conflict in Afghanistan during the civil war of 1990s. According to Human Rights Watch report in 2001, during civil war, women were mostly assaulted and attacked by armed groups to damage the honor and name of the opposition groups<sup>3</sup>. As per this report, women's rights have been seriously violated where women were raped, sexually assaulted and forcibly married. However, women had mobility in the society, girls had opportunity to continue education, women and girls could access health and other services without much of restrictions.

The Taliban regime (1996-2001) is considered the most intense and dark period for women and girls in Afghanistan. During this period women and girls were banned from access to basic rights such as health, education, employment and even movement outside the house without a mahram (male escort). The Taliban restrictions over women resulted in only three per cent of girls receiving some form of basic primary education. This also affected the boys education due to the fact that majority of teachers had been women. Poor health condition made pregnancy and childbirth extremely dangerous for Afghan women. Maternal mortality rate in Afghanistan was the second highest in the world, with an estimated 15,000 women dying each year from pregnancy-related causes. Taliban conservative policies also

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<sup>1</sup> <http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1577&context=jiws>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/afghan-e.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/afghan3/afgwrdr1001-03.htm>

banned women's public appearance, which was a means of discrimination to women's participation in formal and semi-formal governance and thus could not be active in politics and political participation.<sup>4</sup>

The 1979 soviet invasion, the early 1990s civil war and emerging of a conservative group conservative army in mid-1990s have resulted in taking Afghanistan decades backward<sup>5</sup> In the year 2000, Afghanistan was considered a country with largest number of displaced people, highest rate of mortality and prime producer of the world opium. By the year 2000, Afghanistan had suffered the two decades of war and half of their populations were invisible.

The major 9/11 incident and intervention of international community opened up a new discussion over Afghanistan's situation. From 2001, after the fall of Taliban, despite of the hopes expressed for 15 years, the rights and aspirations of Afghan women remain largely unfulfilled. The vast majority of Afghan women suffer a significant human rights deficit. As per the Asia Foundation 2012 report 'half of the people interviewed have not agreed on the women to be decision makers or to enter to politics. Some even have expressed on women's voting to be done in consultation with men.

Afghanistan still ranks the lowest, poorest and fragile country in many UN, World Bank and other relevant surveys. The United Nations Development Program, International Human Development Indicators has ranked Afghanistan 175 in the Index of Gender Inequality<sup>6</sup>. This is due to the country's status with low level of education (population with at least secondary education, adolescent fertility rate and labor force participation rate female-male ratio).

Women's empowerment and equality has mostly been linked to their number in various institutions. For example women's presence in the cabinet, parliament, senate, government ministries and provincial institutions is considered an achievement however; their role as decision makers, level of authority and independence remains a question.

## **B. Relevant legal and policy framework**

### **1. Afghanistan Constitution**

The Afghan Constitution passed on 2004 eventually included certain elements on women's right, equality, equal participation and right to education, health and judiciary. There are positive articles of the constitution that ensure equality and women's participation in politics. Particularly article 22 emphasize on equality between men and women. The Constitution also has guaranteed participation of women by 27 per cent in the Lower and Upper House (Parliament and Senate). The guarantees has obliged the Afghan government to respect, protect and fulfill its obligations towards women's empowerment specifically women's political participation.

### **2. National Instruments**

One of the major progresses towards this was development of "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) 2008-2013"<sup>7</sup>. This strategy is considered a key step

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.un.org/events/women/2002/sit.htm>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/hr\\_afghanwomenatthecrossroads\\_march2011.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/hr_afghanwomenatthecrossroads_march2011.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/AFG.html>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.undp.org.af/publications/KeyDocuments/ANDS\\_Full\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.undp.org.af/publications/KeyDocuments/ANDS_Full_Eng.pdf)

toward promoting security, governance, and economic-growth and poverty reduction

The second national policy that further increases Afghan government national obligations is the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA). NAPWA is the result of the work of Ministry of Women's Affairs, other relevant government ministries and civil society particularly women's organizations. NAPWA's vision is Afghanistan will be a peaceful and progressive country where women and men enjoy security, equal rights and opportunities in all aspects of life<sup>8</sup>.

NAPWA was endorsed as an official working document in the year 2008. This is a ten-year plan up to 2018 that will focus on three pillars mainly as follows:

- Security
- Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights
- Economic and Social Development

### 3. International Instruments

Afghan government ratified CEDAW in the year 2003 after the fall of Taliban without any reservation. As of my personal experience, CEDAW ratification although in contradiction with Sharia Law was a huge step by the Afghan government to commit itself in promoting women's empowerment in Afghanistan.

Afghan government was unable to provide the first CEDAW periodic report due to lack of understanding of the Convention as well as lack of capacity within the relevant government ministries. However the first and second combined periodic CEDAW report was submitted to the CEDAW Committee on December 2011. The report was officially launched through Afghanistan Foreign Ministry on March 2012. On 10 July 2013, the report was presented to the CEDAW Committee by the Afghan government delegation.<sup>9</sup>

The UNSCR 1325 is one of the important international tools that addresses women's participation as decision makers and urges the governments towards its promotion. This resolution is also considered an important one for Afghan women due to the fact that there is a huge imbalance between the numbers of men and women within Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and High Peace Council (HPC). This difference fully impacts women's equal participation as they are not equal in number but also make them marginalized and vulnerable as men influence and take the lead.

Afghanistan is 49<sup>th</sup> country in the world that has now launched a NAP 1325 on women, peace and security. Afghanistan first NAP on implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security was launched by the President of Afghanistan on 30 June 2015<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://mowa.gov.af/Content/files/CHAPTER%202.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/646/82/PDF/N1164682.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>10</sup> <http://mfa.gov.af/en/news/afghanistans-national-action-plan-on-uns-cr-1325-women-peace-and-security>

*Afghan Constitution- 1994- Article 22, 43, 44, 53, 54*

*Afghanistan National development Strategy- 2005- Gender as cross-cutting theme*

*National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan- 2008- 10 years plan for Ministry of Women's Affairs*

*Elimination of Violence against Women Law- 2009- First law that criminalize violence against women a social constraints and not a domestic issue*

*Afghanistan National Action plan on Implementation of United Nation Security Council Resolution 1325- 2015- Emphasizes on women, peace and security, women as decision makers and peace negotiators*

*International Convention on Eliminating All forms of Discrimination against Women- towards ending any form of discrimination against women.*

## II. NAP Implementation So Far

The Afghanistan NAP for implementation of UNSCR 1325 is a key document that offers guidance to governmental agencies and ministries on how to implement UNSCR 1325 in their work. The responsibility to coordinate implementation efforts is held by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The NAP is developed in two phases 2015 - 2018 and 2019 - 2022<sup>11</sup>. A mid-term review is scheduled by 2018 to find out the progress, challenges and bring needed amendments for the second phase.

After the launch in 2015, Afghanistan NAP was also launched at the zone level including North, South, East, West, Central, Northeastern and Southwestern<sup>12</sup>. The launch was planned by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and facilitated by AWN. This was the first time that the local government officials of neighboring provinces were brought together to receive officially copies of Afghanistan NAP, get engage into NAP content discussions and affirm their commitment for implementation of NAP.

In order to increase accountability and implementation pressure on government ministries, MoFA also have been coordinating discussions with ministry of finance to allocate specific government budget for the NAP implementation. Up to date, the discussion is under process however there is not specific budget yet allocated and approved by the government.

## III. Methodology

After the launch of Afghanistan NAP on implementation of UNSCR 1325, this is AWN's first initiative to monitor the implementation progress, gather needed data and develop this monitoring report.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid 10

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/dhrwia.mofa/?fref=ts>



AWN worked with its members and provincial offices to carry research and data collection activities.

In order to develop the most relevant questions according to Afghanistan NAP, a half day workshop with AWN research and networking teams as well as representatives of members was conducted. In this workshop Afghanistan NAP was reviewed, the four pillar indicators from the NAP were studied. After a thorough understanding of the NAP, questions were developed in accordance with the four pillar activities, indicators and responsible institutions. For each government ministry identified as director implementer of the NAP, set of questions were developed and finalized.

The data collection process was undertaken in 28 provinces where the local government officials Ministries of Women’s Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Haj Affairs, Interior, Defense, Information and Culture, Higher Education, Education, Economy, Health, Finance, National Security Directorate, High Peace Council and Provincial Peace Councils, EAW High Commission and Provincial Commissions were interviewed or asked to provide answers to the specific questions developed.

After data collection, a thorough review of the answers and information provided by the relevant government representatives were studied and reviewed. Some of the data provided by those interviewed are specific and in accordance with questions, however some of respondents provided very general information.

## IV. Data Presentation and Analysis

### A. Participation

#### 1. Civil Service

In the past one year, there have been major steps by the National Unity Government to increase women’s leadership and decision making role. This improvement is more linked to the commitments the President and CEO made during their campaigns in 2014 Presidential election as well as the inauguration of National Unity Government.

The below table illustrates the number of leadership women vs. men in various government institutions as of June 2016:

Institution	Women	Men
President Office	102	1104
CEO Office	29	638

Cabinet	4	19
Parliament	69	180
Senate	27	75
Provincial Councils	296	2295
Ambassadors	3	
Deputy Ministers	8	
Governors	1	33
Mayors	0	34

While women’s participation has improved post 2001 where women’s presence and role was completely missing, women’s leadership and decision making role have had a slow progress. Since June 2015, numbers of women have been appointed by the national unity government in some of key positions. These include four ministers, four ambassadors, eight deputy ministers, one governor, one deputy director, attorney general and number of women in key management and leadership positions within the palace and government ministries.

Women’s participation has also improved in various sectors as employees. There are no specific facts and figures available to show up to date the percentage of women vs. men however to highlight the participation of women in some key government institution who are responsible to implement Afghanistan NAP, AWN have collected the below data from the responsible organizations on representation of women in the governance in general.

Institution	Women	Men
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	113 <sup>13</sup>	1287
Supreme Court <sup>14</sup>	240	Not available

<sup>13</sup> Data provided by Ministry of Foreign Affairs

<sup>14</sup> Data provided by Supreme Court

Afghanistan Independent human Rights Commission <sup>15</sup>	351	105
Afghanistan Independent Civil Service Commission <sup>16</sup>	130	546

**2. Security**

Afghan women in National Security Forces have started a fairly important, meaningful and yet challenging journey since 2001. While women below 1 percent representation in 2001, today it is 5 percent. There has been number of efforts in terms of recruitment of more women in security sector through financial support of international community.

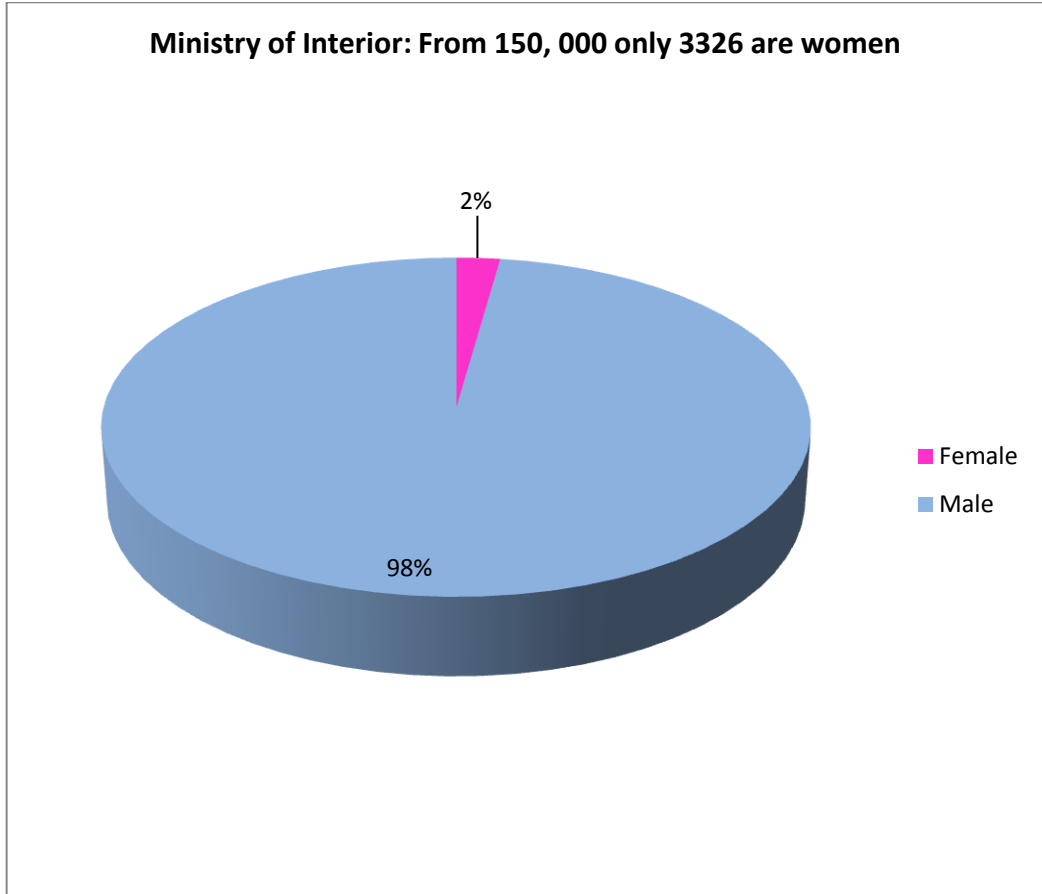
Today women in security forces have identified below achievements. Today Ministries of Interior and Defense have Gender and Human Rights Directorates that aim to support gender mainstreaming in these ministries. Similarly NSD have Gender Department that aims to promote gender equality. These are staffed by women and men as well as led by female senior officials.

Other major achievements within ANSF are female recruitment campaigns for MoI and MoD. The development and partial implementation of gender strategies to recruit women and increase their participation by 20%. Women in ANSF have been provided with education and training opportunities inside the country as well as outside. Group of women from MoI and MoD are sent to Turkey for professional trainings. Right now MoD has sent 150 female army officers for training to Turkey. 150 more female army officers will be sent to India for trainings<sup>17</sup>. Within MoI there are 84 police women associations across the country that are responsible to interact with police women and provide needed support and solutions to the problems women face. In MoD, women associations are newly established and the aim also to bring women in army collective and find joint solution to their challenges.

<sup>15</sup> Data provided by AICSC

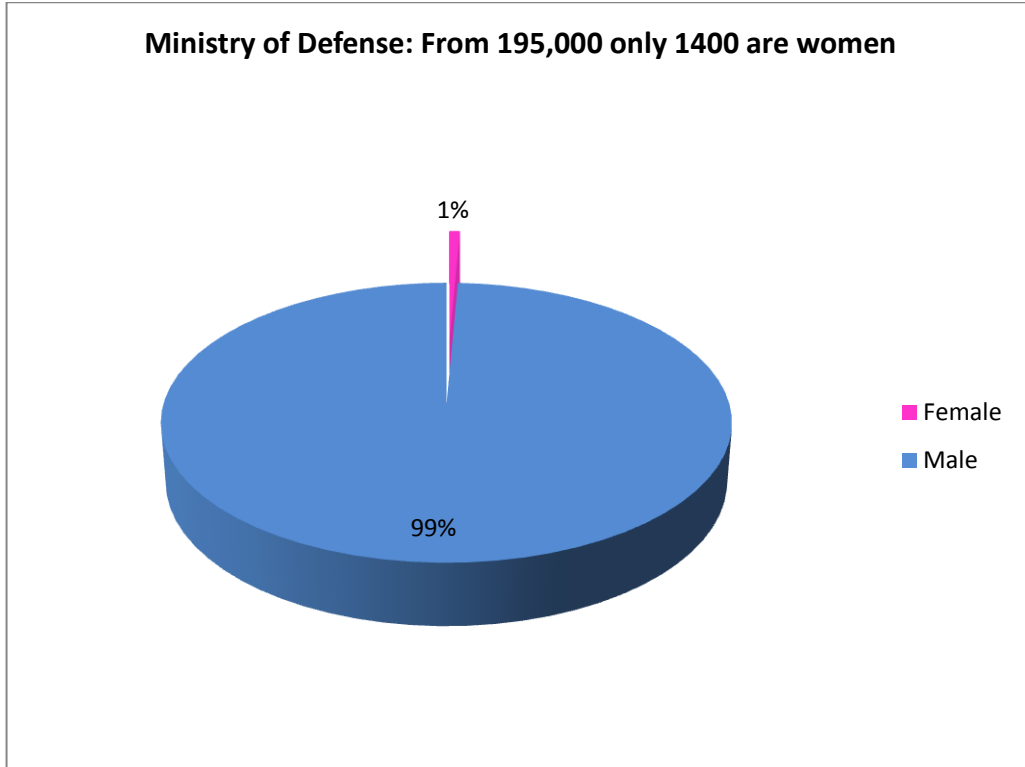
<sup>16</sup> Data provided by AIHRC

<sup>17</sup> Minister of Defense recent remarks in AWN Advocacy Meeting:



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<sup>18</sup> 2937 police women and 389 civilian women



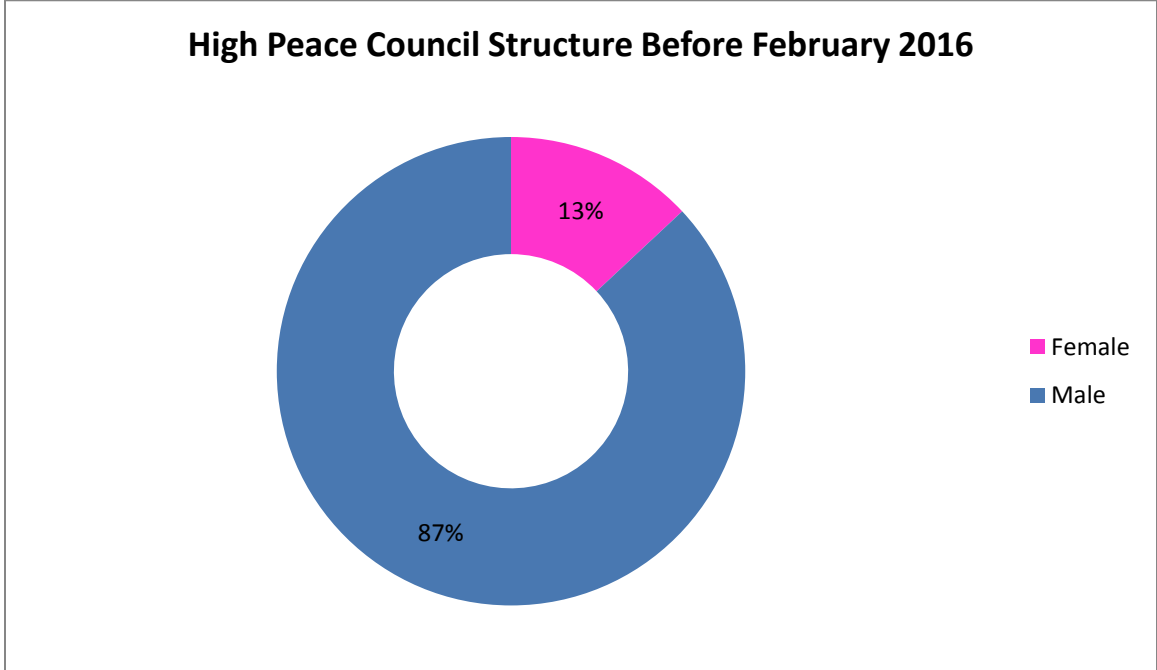
### 3. Peace and Reintegration

The peace and reintegration program started in 2010 after National Peace Consultative Jirga (NPCJ) where 1600 Afghans got together and decided to find way and take necessary measures for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan. After the Jirga, High Peace Council (HPC) was established through a Presidential decree. The HPC consisted of 69 members in Kabul and between 20-25 in provinces. The number of women in provincial peace councils (PPCs) varied between 3-5.

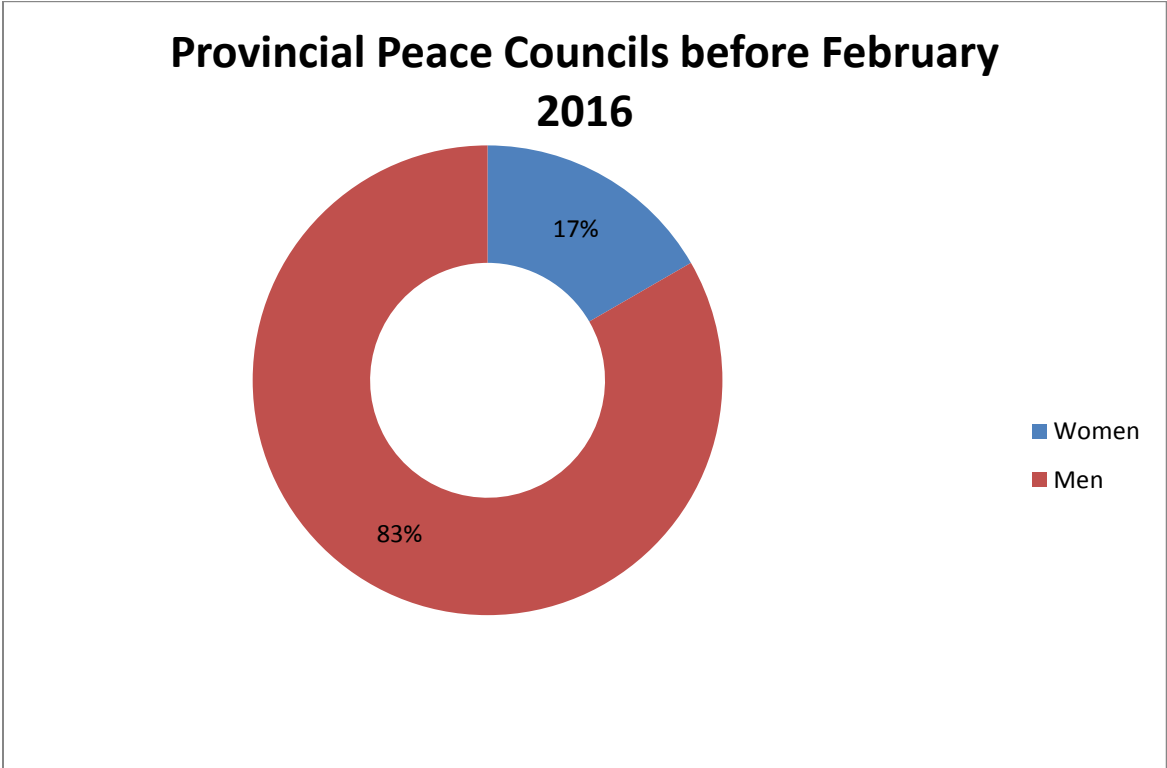
Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration (APRP) is the secretariat to work closely with donors and international organizations on programmatic support to the peace process. The APRP was also established after the NPCJ. There have been efforts towards gender mainstreaming by APRP since establishment. APRP has a gender strategy as well as a gender advisor who is suppose to oversee the women’s engagement in the peace processes as well as women’s contribution and participation in programs related to peace process.

On February, 2016, a major change in HPC and APRP role and responsibilities were as well as leadership took place by the President. This included HPC new leadership with a Chair and six deputy chairs. HPC has a female deputy chair and two female advisors who are part of the leadership to provide strategic advice.

<sup>19</sup> 940 female army officers and 350 civilians



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<sup>20</sup> [http://www.gnwp.org/sites/default/files/resource-field\\_media/Afghanistan\\_1.pdf](http://www.gnwp.org/sites/default/files/resource-field_media/Afghanistan_1.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.gnwp.org/sites/default/files/resource-field\\_media/Afghanistan\\_1.pdf](http://www.gnwp.org/sites/default/files/resource-field_media/Afghanistan_1.pdf)

## B. Protection

### 1. Protecting women from all kinds of violence (domestic, sexual, etc) and discrimination through the implementation, monitoring and amendment of existing laws and policies and the development of new laws and policies

Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) Law is the first law in Afghanistan that discusses about domestic violence, its consequences in families and society and criminalizes various forms of violence and obliges the government relevant agencies to take necessary measures to eliminate violence and discrimination against women within families, at work place as well as in society. This law was enforced through a Presidential Decree in 2009 and is being implemented by law enforcement agencies, and legal service providers and women protection centers.

On September 2015, for the first time the Regulation to eliminate harassment against Women was published through an official gazette by Ministry of Justice. This regulation is being developed taking into consideration article 16 of EVAW law. This regulation aims to oversee complaints related to harassment against women, supporting victims, taking measures to prevent harassment against women, provision of harassment free environment for women and girls in education, higher education and work places.

In June 2016, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) released its third government report on implementation of EVAW law. Although the data released for this report is from 1393 (March 2014-2015), it is included in this monitoring report. The findings of this report is gathering with three institutions, the MoWA (30 provinces), MoI (32 provinces) and Attorney General Office (34 provinces). The three mentioned institutions have registered 5720 cases of violence against women. Out of the registered cases, 1192 cases are finalized. 3523 cases are under consideration. Most of these cases are resolved through mediation by relevant stakeholders indicated in EVAW law.

### 2. Protecting women through access to effective, active and accountable justice system

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2002, gains in women's rights and access to justice in Afghanistan have been remarkable, yet women's rights remain extremely limited. Access to justice strategies have focused on improving formal justice mechanisms, advancing progressive laws and policies, supporting legal awareness campaigns based on these legal provisions, and expanding legal aid services for women.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to supporting state mechanisms, funds aimed at improving women's rights have supported a growing number of NGOs that have not only engaged in legal awareness and services but also provided critical health, psychosocial, and shelter support to women. This emerging cadre of external actors has begun playing an increasingly valuable role in helping women access justice.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> [http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW98\\_Women%27s-Access-to-Justice-in-Afghanistan.pdf](http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW98_Women%27s-Access-to-Justice-in-Afghanistan.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid 19

Presently there are 240 women judges in Afghanistan. These women judges play significant role in women's access to justice however their number is fairly low as compared to the needs of women to access justice throughout the country.

The Afghan Women's Judges Association (AWJA) charter was approved by the High Council of the Supreme Court of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on August 2012 by Approval Number 661 and 216 judges have membership of the AWJA<sup>24</sup>. In the month of May 2016, AWJA had its second election for the chair and other members as well as reviewed its strategic plan with the support of UN Women Afghanistan. Unfortunately there are not further data and information available on the achievements and contributions of AWJA since establishment.

## C. Prevention

### 1. The Protection of women from all types of violence and discrimination through awareness raising and public outreach

There are not many reports available to provide data and analysis for the public outreach and awareness raising efforts to protect women from discriminations and violence. In the past one year, media has played major role in covering initiatives towards ending violence against women. For examples media have been active in covering campaign on 16 days of activism on the occasion of International Women's Day, International Day on Elimination of Violence against Women and International Human Rights Day.

## V. Afghanistan NAP Implementation Challenges

Since official launch of Afghanistan NAP on implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security, the implementation has been slow, without proper monitoring mechanism and measuring the progress according to the targeted activities by relevant government ministries. The challenges highlighted in this report are a mixed analysis from respondents to the questionnaires as well as AWN's ongoing monitoring and observation throughout the year. For the first year, AWN has targeted to highlight the challenges that are the most relevant and needed ones in terms of women, peace and security agenda in Afghanistan. The challenges do not cover all the objectives and activities identified in the NAP.

### A. General

1. While Afghanistan NAP is launched, there is an implementation plan however, and there is a gap of a ministerial plan by each ministry which would increase the accountability of these institutions towards implementation.
2. There is no specific government budget allocated at the moment for NAP implementation. While there are efforts by MoFA and MoF, the absence of budget causes delays and lower down the momentum within government institutions towards implementation of important actions like women's role in peace process, women's role as decision makers, more and meaningful participation of women in Afghan national security forces etc

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<sup>24</sup> <http://supremecourt.gov.af/en/page/association-of-women-judges/statute>



## B. Participation

1. While Afghanistan NAP emphasize on meaningful and effective decision making role of women in government, the current percentage of women vs. men leaders is fairly low.
2. Though since June 2015, there are improvements in terms of women decision making role, this is mostly done based on the political decisions and divisions of seats. Very few women have been appointed based on their previous experiences and contributions.
3. There are specific ministerial plans towards increasing meaningful participation of women especially at the provincial level. The participation of women in provinces is limited only to head of Directorates of Women's Affairs.
4. While two female governors were appointed for Ghor and Daikundi provinces, it was very discouraging to see transfer of Ghor province and linking it to her capacity and run the province.
5. Prior to June 2015, Afghanistan had first female Mayor<sup>25</sup> in Daikundi, first female Chief Prosecutor in Herat<sup>26</sup> and first female district chief police in Kabul<sup>27</sup> were unfortunate removed from their roles. While transfers of positions are normal processes unfortunately these posts were filled by men.
6. Women believe they have been affected negatively within the ANSF due to male dominance and strong discrimination. Majority of women consulted believe that they have been waiting for over five years to get their promotion according to organizational policy and procedure however there are no concrete steps and plans to put the promotion plans into actions.
7. The major challenge towards recruitment of women in ANSF (MoI, MoD, and NDS) has been weak recruitment campaigns. There has been almost no awareness raising initiatives to target communities at the district and villages on the need and role of women in security sector. This has resulted in continues negative perception of communities on the role of women in ANSF
8. Despite of a new policy on fighting against sexual harassment at work place and certain decrees issued by leadership, there has been no complaint and follow up mechanism to support women at risk of discrimination and harassment
9. While it is encouraging to see changes in HPC and APRP strategies and leadership, there is no clarity on what will be the participation and contribution of women members in HPC and PPCs. There has been investment on women members in terms equipping with needed capacities and international peace related travels. If these memberships are dissolved, the so far experiences and expertise of women will go waste.
10. There have been efforts in the past one year about peace process in Afghanistan. One of these efforts was the quadrilateral coordination group (QCG) meetings between Afghanistan, China, US and Pakistan. Unfortunately no women leaders within government or outside have been invited in these meetings. The QCG also worked on a roadmap to peace. No women were consulted prior to production of this document. Nor this document is available in public for review and usage.

## C. Protection

1. While EAW law is an important tool to protect women from violence, provide needed support to women victims of violence, identify and prosecute the perpetrators, the third government

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.plaintalkbm.com/azra-jafari/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.unodc.org/afghanistan/en/frontpage/2010/January/interview-maria-bashir.html>

<sup>27</sup> <http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/news/2014/01/15/22312657-meet-afghanistans-first-female-police-chief-mother-of-five-jamila-bayaz?lite>

report on implementation of EAW law on violence against women show an increase in violence against women.

2. According to AIHRC<sup>28</sup>, year 2015 has been the deadliest year for women in Afghanistan. Unfortunately crimes such as killing, stoning, lashing, cutting body parts of women and rape has happened to women and girls across the country. While EAW law criminalizes all the mentioned crimes, there is no mechanism to identify perpetrators, prosecute them and provide psycho- socio support to women and girls victims of violence.
3. While Afghanistan NAP emphasize on establishment of a monitoring mechanism on implementation, raising awareness about the law and enhancing public outreach, only few women focused NGOs have worked on this. There are no government plans in Kabul and provinces towards this up to date.
4. While the regulation to eliminate harassment against women is gazette, the level discrimination and harassment still exist within government institutions in Kabul and provinces. There are not mechanisms in place for complaints and follow up where women could feel comfortable to register and seek assistance.
5. While there are efforts to strengthen the role of judiciary in Afghanistan, the first female judge candidate for membership in Supreme Court high council was rejected by members of parliament including women. This show low level of political will from policy makers to support women's role in structures like Supreme Court<sup>29</sup>.
6. The informal justice practices, existing harmful traditional and cultural practices have influenced the formal justice mechanisms in most parts of the country. This results in low level of prosecution of those committing violence and discrimination against women and girls.

## D. Prevention

1. In the past one year on Afghanistan NAP launch, there has not been any national level initiatives including campaigns delivering messages, awareness and outreach on ending sexual violence against women and girls.

## VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

### A. Conclusion

Afghanistan has made tremendous progress towards gender equality over the last 15 years. The country has one of the most gender sensitive constitutions in the world, has many laws and policies in place to address gender imbalances and women's empowerment. The challenge remains at the implementation level. Because many government bureaucrats do not really appreciate gender issues, planners do not adequately provide for interventions that specifically address women's needs in sector policies, in sector plans and budgets. The result is that the well-meaning laws and policies largely remain on paper. Government priorities for post conflict areas continue to focus on physical infrastructure even as the dignity and bodily integrity of the woman continues to violate. So government continues be to focus on

<sup>28</sup> <http://ariananews.af/latest-news-fa/۲۰۱۵-خونين خترين جر اي زن نان-افغان حقو/?lang=fa>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.yahoo.com/news/female-supreme-court-nominee-rejected-afghan-parliament-085706744.html?ref=gs>

physical infrastructure such as building of schools while the school drop-out rate for girls continues to rise in post conflict areas

Afghanistan has also made great strides in ensuring women’s participation in leadership and decision making. The provision of a woman MP for each province and for 25% women’s representation in provincial and district councils has brought many women into positions of leadership, the hitherto invisible have become very visible, and as a result society is gradually accepting the inevitable; that women make as good leaders as men. Women who have been appointed in top positions in statutory bodies have done a commendable job and should be applauded. This should make government alert to women’s ability to successfully lead statutory bodies. Even while women in the public service top positions must work extra hard to prove their legibility, there is nothing wrong with hard work. It is evident that the majority of women in the public service are in the bottom rung.

In terms of prevention and protection of women against sexual and gender based violence, a lot still remains to be done. The police department and particularly the Family Response Units is trying to do a good and difficult job with meager resources. The number of High Court Judges is small making prosecution of SGBV cases take a long time and leading to witnesses losing interest in the case. At the same time, the law enforcement officers including the police and the local councils are not familiar with the provisions of UNSCR 1325 and the Afghanistan NAP is not yet popularized. Knowledge and internalization of laws and policies and as well as international instruments that protect women against SGBV would go a long way to enhance prevention and protection.

The women of Afghanistan have played a commendable role in conflict transformation. They have come together in associations, coalitions, networks and task forces to get their voices heard through various initiatives and opportunities. This they have done despite the poverty, the trauma, and the meager resources at their disposal. They have held communities together. They have lighted a candle for peace even in difficult circumstances. This is the transformative element of conflict. It is one good example of women’s participation in conflict management, peace building, and decision making which are essential elements of UNSCR1325.

One alarming finding was the fact that Afghanistan’s formal education curricula do not integrate gender and peace education. Neither the primary school curriculum, the secondary school curriculum, nor the curriculum of tertiary institutions and colleges does. One conclusion we could draw from this is that policy makers in the education sector are not aware of the importance of peace education. With such a post conflict country, where the potential for conflict is always present, it is essential to integrate peace education in the formal education curriculum.

## B. Recommendations

Afghanistan National Action on implementation of UNSCR 1325 must be closely monitored. The successful indicator for effectiveness of this plan would be it is implementation by concerned government ministries and local governments across the country.

### 1. General

1. Funding initiatives towards NAP implementation must be channeled as direct as possible through government and civil society. This helps avoid delays by the third party and adds a lot of pressure on	MoFA MoF Donors
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government for accountability and implementation purposes	
2. The steering committee and technical working group for NAP should be reminded on their important responsibility to making implementation of NAP happen within their own concerned institutions/ ministries at Kabul and provincial level.	All members of Steering and technical working committees
3. Ministries must be equipped with technical resources beside funding to make the NAP implementation happen	Donors
4. Monitoring of NAP implementation by CSOs as an independent step for accountability and transparency must be funded by donors. If a civil society oversight is not established, implementation of NAP, the progress indicators cannot be measured and the weaknesses will not be improved.	CSOs Donors

## 2. Participation

1. Government should review the affirmative action policy with a view to increasing women’s representation to 30 percent at all levels of governance as agreed in civil service commission strategies and plans.	Civil Service Commission President Office CEO Office Ministry of Women’s Affairs
2. Women can equally contribute in strategic decisions and policy making processes. We encourage ANSF to increase women leadership and decision making role ANSF beside Gender Directorates.	MoI MoD NDS
3. We also call for special attention on the appointment of new female recruits. This must be done according to a plan to ensure gender equality within different departments where women are assigned to posts according to their expertise and vacant posts are filled with women technical experts.	MoI MoD NDS
4. We call on immediate action of ANSF to establish a direct complaint mechanism where women can file complaints on disrespect, discrimination and sexual harassment with confident and trust as well as appoint a trustworthy board to oversee the cases immediately after submission.	MoI MoD NDS
5. It’s time for commitments to be actualized. Women would like to discourage the culture of tokenism, nepotism, or elitism. We call on NUG to select female participants in the upcoming peace negotiations on the basis of their knowledge of the issues, their speaking skills, and their decision-making, negotiation, mediation, and consensus building skills. At least 25 percent of the peace negotiators should be women.	President Office CEO Office HPC APRP

## 3. Protection

1. Sensitize local provincial and district authorities on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 and the NAP and support processes for them to develop provincial and district Action Plans, and also sensitize law enforcement	Governors District Governors CSOs specifically
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agents because VAW takes place at the local level	women focused Donors
2. Design and implement medical interventions including psychosocial support for women in post conflict areas in time for the next budget cycle	MoPH MoWA Women led CSOs
3. Any kind of discrimination and violence against girls and women stamps Afghanistan with a darker scar of horror. Afghan government must ensure that incidents of violence against girls and women are considered top priority by the rule of law institutions. Perpetrators are found, arrested and judgment is done in accordance with national laws such as EVAW law.	MoJ Supreme Court MoWA AIHRC
4. Governmental Implementation plans much be developed to specifically make actions and steps towards implementation of all areas of the NAP related to protection.	Relevant institutions

#### 4. Prevention

1. Integrating gender, ending discrimination and violence against women and peace issues into the education curricula at all levels and auditing such curricula for gender before they are published	MoE MoHE MoWA
2. Design awareness raising campaigns, media interactions, engagement of local authorities and influential leaders for finding prevention measures and solutions towards prevention of any form of violence especially sexual violence against women	All relevant institutions