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Women for Afghan Women and Partners Call for Responsible U.S. Policy Towards Afghanistan

Women for Afghan Women, the People’s Peace Movement of Afghanistan, and Common Defense submit recommendations to create a sustainable peace in Afghanistan

(New York, NY) July 30, 2019 – In advance of the second round of Democratic presidential debates scheduled for July 30th and 31st, Women for Afghan Women (WAW), the People’s Peace Movement of Afghanistan, and Common Defense, submitted to each of the candidates a series of recommendations to guide the policy of the United States (U.S.) Government in Afghanistan. These organizations—all of whom have been directly impacted by the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan—are working to ensure a responsible end to the violence and to build a peaceful and secure Afghanistan that protects and promotes human rights.

WAW and its partners are seeking to amplify the voice of Afghan women, youth, and other marginalized populations and demand their meaningful inclusion in the peace process in order to honor the Afghan people, as well as the sacrifices made by and the courage of U.S. troops who served in Afghanistan. Support of an inclusive peace process in Afghanistan represents the first opportunity for the U.S. to enforce the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 and the National Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security, wherein the U.S. is obligated to ensure women play a substantive role in peacebuilding initiatives in conflict affected countries.

WAW is the largest Afghan women’s rights and shelter-providing organization in Afghanistan and the world, and has provided over 38,000 women and children in Afghanistan and the U.S. with life-changing and life-saving services, trained more than 362,000 individuals on women’s rights, and provided nearly 723,000 internally-displaced persons and refugee returnees with protection and monitoring. WAW’s operations in Afghanistan and the U.S. place it in a uniquely qualified position to inform U.S. policymakers about the implications of U.S. policy on Afghans generally, and Afghan women and girls, in particular, to ensure their voices will not be marginalized in efforts to define peace and the country’s future.

The People’s Peace Movement of Afghanistan is a group of Afghan civilians committed to putting an end to four decades of violence in the country by creating a groundswell of grassroots support for peace. The movement works tirelessly to pressure all sides of the conflict to commit to a ceasefire in order to create an inclusive, comprehensive, and sustainable peace. These peaceful protestors walked more than 370 miles from Helmand to Kabul during Ramadan in 2018 to persuade parties to the conflict to lay down their arms, which led to the 2018 Eid Ceasefire.

Common Defense is a grassroots organization of U.S. veterans and military family members fighting to preserve the core values they swore to uphold and defend, while protecting their communities from hate and violence. Their members serve on the front lines of social, economic, and global justice, and champion a truly equitable and representative democracy in the U.S., Afghanistan, and around the world.

After four decades of conflict, hundreds of thousands of deaths, and the distinction of being the world’s bloodiest conflict, the Afghan people are war-weary. All parties must continue their efforts towards sustainable peace through an immediate ceasefire, a comprehensive peace process with the meaningful inclusion of women, a responsible drawdown of forces, and sustained development, security, technical, governance, and economic assistance.
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Women for Afghan Women (WAW) is a grassroots, non-profit organization dedicated to securing and protecting the rights of disenfranchised Afghan women and girls in Afghanistan and New York, particularly their rights to develop their individual potential, to self-determination, and to be represented in all areas of life: political, social, cultural, and economic. WAW advocates for women’s rights and challenges the norms that underpin gender-based violence wherever opportunities arise to influence attitudes and bring about change.