



Towards a Sustainable Peace in Afghanistan

As three of the most impacted communities of the conflict in Afghanistan, Afghan civilians, and American veterans, [Women for Afghan Women](#), the [People's Peace Movement of Afghanistan](#), and [Common Defense](#), and working to ensure a responsible end to the violence and to build a peaceful, secure Afghanistan that protects and promotes human rights. We seek to amplify the voices of Afghan women, youth, and other marginalized populations and demand their meaningful inclusion in the peace process and honor the sacrifice and courage of our servicemembers. As such, we put forth the following recommendations to create a sustainable peace in Afghanistan:

- All parties must agree to an immediate ceasefire.
 - A [cessation of hostilities](#) can give rise to a broader ceasefire, which will create the space to negotiate a comprehensive peace agreement and rebuild Afghanistan.
- An all-inclusive Afghan peace process must occur amongst Afghans themselves, including civil society, marginalized groups, Afghan women and youth, and members of the Afghan government in order to determine the tangible steps and policies required to establish a durable peace.
 - Conflicts around the world have proven that women's involvement in peace processes give rise to peace agreements that are [35 percent](#) more likely to be sustainable over 15 years and beyond. Exclusionary processes create agreements that are [twice](#) as likely to crumble within two year.
 - Women, from all facets of society, must be included in a meaningful manner and should comprise ideally 50 percent, but [at least 30 percent](#), of the delegations involved in the peacebuilding process,
 - The Afghan peace process serves as the first opportunity to enforce the [Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017](#) and the [National Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security](#), wherein the U.S. has an obligation to ensure Afghan women play a substantive role in building Afghanistan's future.
- A responsible troop withdrawal and end to the longest conflict in U.S. history.
 - Such a conclusion to the conflict must not sacrifice the [gains](#) Afghans, particularly Afghan women, have made in exercising their political, social, cultural, and economic rights since 2001.
- Sustained, long-term investment at current or enhanced levels to build upon the progress Afghanistan has made across all sectors since 2001. As the U.S. military presence and funding decreases, a corollary increase in civilian-side expenditures and development can create the conditions to support an enduring peace.
 - Investments in development, governance, infrastructure, and economic assistance of at least [\\$633 million](#) and [\\$5 billion](#) for security assistance will enable a successful transition that allows U.S. troops to come home. To promote burden-sharing and multilateralism, the U.S. should work closely with the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, foreign governments, and other partners to create a multi-year [peace dividend package](#) to stimulate Afghanistan's economy and create disincentives towards violence.
 - A commitment by the U.S. government to support democratic governance, the rule of law, a free press, and the promotion of fundamental human rights will ensure the substantial price the U.S. has paid in [blood](#) and [treasure](#) will not have been made in vain.
 - Poverty and unemployment are two of the [biggest drivers of conflict](#) and radicalization; economic empowerment initiatives can address the U.S. foreign policy goals of countering and preventing violent extremism.
 - Technical assistance of Afghan security forces and security sector reform will enhance their ability to tackle law enforcement and counterterrorism challenges.

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 to ensure an immediate ceasefire, a comprehensive peace process with the meaningful inclusion of women, and sustained development assistance in order to bring the conflict in Afghanistan to an end.