FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Women for Afghan Women condemns the attack on Kabul University that took the lives of 19 and wounding 22 innocent souls.

Women for Afghan Women sends its deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims, to Kabul University, and to the people of Afghanistan who have suffered too long under the shadow of terror and wanton violence.

(New York, NY) November 3, 2020 – Women for Afghan Women (WAW) has spent over 20 years working relentlessly on the frontlines of the struggle to defend, protect, and empower the rights of Afghan women and girls in Afghanistan and in the United States (US). However, today, we stand like never before with the people of Afghanistan, Kabul University, and the families of those whose loved ones were lost in the senseless terror attack carried out against innocent students and an institution that aims to build a brighter and better future for the country.

Hundreds of clients—women and children—live in our network of shelters and under our protective care in Afghanistan. In the US, the support services provided by our New York Community Center have been life-saving, as the vast majority of our US clients live in the area hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in North America.

Now, after COVID-19 ravaged New York City, it is raging in every corner of Afghanistan where our staff are working day and night to keep our clients safe. Our over-extended operations are increasingly strained with expanding caseloads coupled by shortages in staff, supplies, and resources. Many of our Afghan staff are risking their lives and taking week-long shifts to monitor the health of our clients and to keep our centers operational. We have already lost one staff member to the pandemic, and tens of other staff, including our Afghanistan Country Director, are currently suffering from severe COVID-19 symptoms.

But WAW will not be deterred and will continue to offer life-saving assistance to thousands of Afghans who have nowhere else to turn, including the families of the 24 victims killed in the recent terror attack against a hospital and maternity ward in Kabul.

In the US, this pandemic has laid bare the inequities that led to the disproportionately high COVID-19 infection and mortality rates in communities of color. This harsh reality has been amplified by the brutal deaths of Black Americans—most recently, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd—at the hands of police or persons who feel immune to the consequences of committing hate crimes. WAW stands by the nation-wide civil unrest against systemic racism and police brutality that have long ruthlessly oppressed, incarcerated, and taken countless Black Americans’ lives. And so, in addition to all that we do today and every day, WAW stands with #BlackLivesMatter.

WAW is calling on government to develop and implement immediate plans to demilitarize police forces, increase investment in non-violent response training, and improve race relations with communities where policing has oppressed rather than served and protected. We call on government to provide everyone with equal access to proper healthcare, and for an immediate reversal of decades of policies that have led to the defunding of public education and economic empowerment programs in communities of color.

Globally, we call on the international community, with the US at the fore, to direct the majority of investments towards strengthening civil society, public institutions, and economic development to bring about sustainable
democracy, just peace, and long-term stability for which civilian populations around the world, including the Afghan people, yearn.

We call on all leaders and elected officials, from the US to Afghanistan, to recognize and put into action the only long-term solution and strategy to combating racism, violence, insecurity, and instability: equal opportunity and equal protection under the law for all.

This path forward is our only communal hope for the embattled world in which we all live.

For press related inquiries contact: Mona Abu Rayyan
Women for Afghan Women Communications Manager
158-24 73rd Ave., Fresh Meadows, New York 11366
Tel: 917.525.0097 | E-mail mona@womenforafghanwomen.org

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.

www.womenforafghanwomen.org