

Osservatorio Internazionale
Afghanistan 

AFGHANISTAN OBSERVATORY 2023

The voice of Afghan women in the world, agent of development and change, between resistance and existence for the reconstruction of peace, security, participation and acknowledgement of rights.

“Osservatorio Afghanistan” is a project promoted by Fondazione Pangea and supported by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the framework of the Fourth National Action Plan on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 et seq.

Fondazione Pangea organised roundtables, workshops, conferences and meetings, both face-to-face and online, with various Afghan politicians, activists, academics, professionals and young women from inside the country and abroad.

Below we present the results of these various meetings, elaborated in the form of recommendations, to urge the Italian government to support the active role of Afghan women inside and outside their country, for the construction of an international dialogue, the promotion of peace, security and the recognition of fundamental human rights, in the absence of real normative instruments in Afghanistan.

Our recommendations align with the contents of the “Joint Declaration on Afghanistan” of 18 October 2023, drafted following the event held in Rome between Representatives and Special Envoys to Afghanistan from Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Given and in consideration of the above, we recommend that the Italian Government, the other UN Member States and the international community put pressure on the current de facto government in Afghanistan to recognise and respect the human rights of women.

We therefore call for:

- to make possible the free movement of women, in total safety, as full subjects of rights, regardless of whether they are accompanied by a man
- to allow access to free education at all ages, up to university, for both men and women, providing a high quality education
- to work towards providing scholarships and educational opportunities at all levels to young Afghan refugee women in Italy, to prepare a new generation of women professionals
- to allow women in Afghanistan to work in every public and private sector, including the humanitarian one, without any limitations, on the same basis as men, and without any threat or consequence on their security and psycho-physical integrity
- to recognise women's free choice in marriage and motherhood, and to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women perpetrated by men
- that the current de facto Afghan government will not be recognised as legitimate by Italy or any other country that calls itself democratic, until the above-mentioned preconditions for women's full participation in every sphere of private and public life are guaranteed.

We also request the Italian Government and the international community

- to promote all actions necessary for women to be part of the country's decision-making process as organised civil society and as political representation
- to strengthen and support all initiatives aimed at fostering the involvement and participation of Afghan women in Advocacy actions, at high-level international discussions and processes, and at the same time support mentoring initiatives and events to raise a new generation of women in civil society organisations inside and outside Afghanistan. Indeed, we recall that women's participation in the life of the country, its reconstruction and the Peace Process is one of the fundamental requirements of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda related to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 et seq.
- That support be given to initiatives aimed at promoting respect, equality in rights and duties and equal opportunities, between representatives of local communities and the population, in all areas of the country, including rural areas. May such activities be targeted at women and men of all ages, including young people.

Finally, concerned about the alarming humanitarian and economic crisis being experienced by the majority of the Afghan population and the security risks that persist in the country due in part to the political choices of the current de facto government, as well as climate change and natural disasters such as earthquakes, we ask that:

- humanitarian operations to support the population be carried out transparently and in col-

laboration with international and Afghan civil society organisations present in the country, especially those led by women

- women are considered among the primary beneficiaries of development and emergency policies. The ban on working for local and international aid workers should therefore be lifted so that they can reach women directly
- the health system in the country should be strengthened, and support should be given to women doctors and socio-health facilities still operating, to provide quality care and treatment, particularly on maternal and child sexual and reproductive health. We also demand support for interventions aimed at mental health for women forced to live in a condition of domestic segregation and control by men that has continued over time
- to provide not only assistance and emergency support to the Afghan population and women, but to flank it with programmes capable of developing a 'mutual aid and circular economy, capable of generating long-term economic sustenance

As of today, Afghanistan is the only country in the world to implement a real gender apartheid by law, which oppresses all women in the country regardless of their age, ethnicity, abilities and achievements. We believe it is important to deepen the debate on discrimination, violence against women and the general population, which go unpunished in the country in light of the fundamental principles and values of international law. We therefore hope to activate a mechanism to support those who experience gender-based violations, both in Afghanistan and in other countries around the world.

Finally, we recommend building pathways in Italy and at the level of the international community to protect those who defend human rights.

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