

## Press Statement on Peace Agreement between USA and Taliban

### On the Way to Lasting Peace

29<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020

*WILPF Afghanistan section is a feminist and pacifist peace membership organization of 10000 individuals members from 34 provinces of Afghanistan welcome the agreement, signed on Saturday 29 February 2020 by the United States of America and the Taliban in Qatar. At the same time the re-affirmation of USA and NATO support to Afghan government in Kabul. We hope that it will mark the beginning of a better future for Afghanistan. We call on all Afghans especially political leaders, the armed conflict parties as well as Taliban to take best advantage of this political deal. As a strong nation we have to pave the way for social justice, social inclusion and avoid discrimination and conflict.*

In the last decade more than 100,000 civilian casualties have been documented by the UN as a result of the conflict; including 35,000 killed and 65,000 injured<sup>1</sup>. Local communities have seen an increase of direct attacks on health care and education facilities by Government and non-government armed actors. Beyond the figures, the harm caused to the physical, mental, social and economic well-being of people has been countless. WILPFer family around the world and especially in Afghanistan is against usage of force and conflict. We believe in non-violent mechanism to resolve disputes. Therefore, continuously we have asked for greater protection of civilians, aid workers and the safety of public institutions. We demand complete cease fire and we welcome any step in this regard. We also call strongly on Afghan government and political parties to resolve the emerged conflict after the announcement of the result of the presidential election. There should strong measure to avoid any civil war as common people are exhausted of war.

Afghanistan continues to face many challenges especially women and children who are not involved in development of any war but they are the direct and severe victims of war and conflict. Poverty has increased and deepened, hunger and malnutrition are at dangerously high levels, children are disproportionately affected by the crisis and thousands of families are displaced due conflict and natural disasters every year. Afghanistan WILPFers are committed to mobiles community especially women, youth, persons with disabilities and the marginalized and vulnerable to play their important role in peace building. There are also many successes that have been achieved in the last four years in localization of women, peace and security agenda not only in cities but also in rural and far sighted areas among women of both sides.

The peace deal between USA and Taliban has been designed without inclusion of Afghan government and Afghan people. We are concerned about some of the articles of the agreement which might give a set back to the achievements of the past 18 years by women. The recent report by AIHRC and MoWA in 2019 shows increase of 20%<sup>2</sup> in domestic violence cases and the recent statement by foreign secretary of USA mentioned in his last statement that Afghan women's right is the issue of intra-Afghan dialogue. Still, it's not clear for us what is the interpretation of Sharia rights for women. We call upon our international allies and partners to provide support for Afghan women and closely monitor Taliban's commitment to the peace deal.

This is the time that we all should forget our differences and join hands for making peace a reality. Peace can only be long-lasting if it provides all Afghans - women and men, boys and girls - with equal opportunities and access to services that every Afghan life and dignity is valued. An inclusive peace process and reconciliation solution is essential for sustainable development by meaningful participation of youth, women and direct war victims. The people of Afghanistan deserve a lasting peace and stability. Hopefully to move forward ON THE WAY TO LASTING PEACE!

<sup>1</sup> UNAMA Afghanistan Annual Report 2019 "Protection of civilians in armed conflict."

<sup>2</sup> AIHRC. Summary of the Report on Violence Against Women: The causes, context, and situation of violence against women in Afghanistan. 11 March 2018 available at: <https://www.aihrc.org.af/media/files/Research%20Reports/Summerry%20report-VAW-2017.pdf>