



Check Against Delivery

Permanent Mission of
Afghanistan to the
United Nations

نماینده دائمی
جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان
در سازمان ملل متحد

Security Council Thematic Debate:
“Women, Peace and Security: Sexual Violence
in Situations of Armed Conflict”

Statement made by H.E. Dr. Zahir Tanin,
Ambassador of Afghanistan to the U.N

New York, 19 June 2008



**Permanent Mission of
Afghanistan to the
United Nations**

نماینده دائمی
جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان
در سازمان ملل متحد

Mr. President,

At the outset I would like to thank the United States for organizing this open debate on a very important protection gap, namely sexual and gender based violence in armed conflict and post conflict situations.

Mr. President,

In situations of military conflict and periods of instability, armed groups often use violence against civilians, especially women, as a deliberate tactic of war. In Afghanistan, the devastating impacts of three decades of armed conflict have particularly affected the most vulnerable part of our population, namely women and children. During this period, the basic rights of Afghan women have been undermined, even denied due to the vicious cycle of violence which allowed groups with power to act with impunity in the face of women's vulnerability. Under the Taliban's regime, Afghanistan was a graveyard for human and women's rights where barbaric atrocities against women constantly occurred. No one can forget the images of the innocent Afghan women being slaughtered in Kabul's stadium and those images of the inhuman Taliban bludgeoning women in the streets for so called un-virtuous behavior.

Today the results of widespread violence during years of conflict are still affecting private and public spheres of women's life in Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

In several armed conflict situations, acts of sexual and gender based violence were used to humiliate, and forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group. In Afghanistan, sexual violence was not a predominant method employed by armed groups in conflict, due to the cultural bounds of the society, however the use of sexual violence was used by some individuals and groups as an instrument of war.

Afghanistan recognizes that sexual and gender based violence is a threat to international peace and security and condemns all sexual and gender based violence committed against civilians in conflict affected situations. We would also like to underscore the necessity of acknowledging that in armed and post conflict countries, the dimension of violence used against women has multiple aspects that extend beyond a sexual nature.

Mr. President,

It has been eight years since the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 and about seven years since the fall of the barbaric regime of the Taliban



**Permanent Mission of
Afghanistan to the
United Nations**

نماینده دائمی
جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان
در سازمان ملل متحد

and the beginning of the peace process, democratization, and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Our vision is a peaceful and progressive nation where women and men enjoy security, equal rights, and opportunities in all spheres of life.

The Government of Afghanistan has made considerable achievements in protecting women from violence and assuring a secure environment where their rights are protected, and their participation in decisions making bodies and in the peace building process is guaranteed.

Afghanistan has undertaken several initiatives in addressing violence against women as embodied in the Constitution, the MDGs, the Afghanistan Compact, the ANDS, and the international treaties. The Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs is leading our efforts in achieving this goal and is chairing the Ministerial Task Force created in 2005 to eliminate all forms of violence against women. We would like to seize this opportunity to express our gratitude to all organizations including UN agencies, especially UNIFEM as well as the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), for assisting us in advancing the status of Afghan women.

Mr. President,

Progress in the process of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants and illegal armed groups has contributed to minimizing violence against civilian particularly women and children. However, the successful completion of the DDR process will help to create an environment where women will be empowered to exercise their rights.

The Afghan Government recognizes the security sector reform as crucial to strengthen the rule of law, to ensure the protection of women's rights, to

improve law enforcement by legitimate national bodies and to end the culture of impunity. But at the same time, we would like to underscore the need for women to participate in the security sector reform process. In this regard initial steps have been taken by the Ministry of Interior to increase the recruitment of female law-enforcement officers, and to provide gender-sensitivity training in the police academy. Police Family Response Units are staffed by women who are trained to deal with domestic violence and to respond to female victims of crime.

Mr. President,



**Permanent Mission of
Afghanistan to the
United Nations**

نماینده دائمی
جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان
در سازمان ملل متحد

The escalation of violence and insecurity in some parts of the country as a result of the terrorist activities carried out by the Taliban and Al Qaeda, hinders the implementation of the rule of law and consequently makes women vulnerable to all forms of violence. Different methods of violence against women are used by the Taliban and Al Qaeda to intimidate, terrorize, and force Afghan women's retreat from public activities and limit their access to health care, education, justice and economic and social endeavors, especially in the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan.

The terrorist campaign of the Taliban and Al Qaeda's has particularly affected girl's school enrollment and attendance, schools are burned and female teachers and students are attacked and threatened.

The legacy of the long conflict including access to weapons, difficulty in stabilization efforts and the rampant poverty is reflected in self immolation, forced marriage, domestic and other forms of violence. In order to be successful in our duty to eradicate these practices, we request the international community to strengthen our national capacities in ensuring a secure environment, improving economic and social conditions and implementing human rights and the rule of law in Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

Protection of civilians, including women, is highlighted as an inherent part of the ISAF - NATO led mission operating in Afghanistan, we would like to emphasize on the need to integrate specific strategies for the better

protection of women from all forms of violence including sexual violence. We also encourage peacekeeping forces to receive gender sensitivity pre-deployment training.

Mr. President,

Sustainable peace in Afghanistan can't be achieved without the participation of half of its population, namely Afghan women. Afghanistan recognizes the importance of women's positive contribution to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and the promotion of peace and security. As Secretary General Ban Ki Moon justly stated this morning the most effective way to combat violence against women is to make women messenger of peace instead of victims of violence and this reflects our vision for Afghan Women.

Thank you for your attention.