



Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

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Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on assuming the Presidency of the Council and for your leadership during the month of March. I also thank you for convening this important meeting on the situation in Afghanistan. We also appreciate the strong joint press stakeout statement issued prior to this meeting. I'm grateful to Ms. Georgette Gagnon, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Officer-in-Charge of UNAMA, for her detailed briefing. I thank the previous speakers for reaffirming their support for the people of Afghanistan, particularly women and girls.

Madam President,

Yesterday marked International Women's Day, an important moment to reflect on the challenges faced by millions of women around the world. I wish to pay tribute to the courage and determination of all women, especially the women of Afghanistan, who are engaged in a historic struggle for freedom, justice and lasting peace. The most meaningful way to honor their commitment and sacrifice is to support their efforts to reclaim their rightful place in society and in the international community.

Madam President,

In five months, it will mark five years since the Taliban imposed their rule in Afghanistan. It is now evident to the international community, and to this Council, that during this period the Taliban have taken no meaningful steps toward change, moderation, or engagement with the realities and needs of the people of Afghanistan. On the contrary, their policies have grown increasingly rigid, exclusionary, and repressive. Afghanistan continues to face a profound social, humanitarian, economic, and political crisis a crisis that is the direct result of Taliban governance based on repression and intimidation.

The systematic deprivation of women and girls of their fundamental rights and freedoms, the dismantling of inclusive institutions, widespread human rights violations, targeted killings of former security forces and civilians accused of armed opposition, rising poverty, and deepening despair have collectively pushed Afghanistan toward isolation and toward the brink. Women and girls have effectively been erased from public life. Civic space has collapsed. Economic structures have deteriorated dramatically. An entire generation is being denied education and opportunity.

These, **Madam President,** are not unintended consequences; they are the foreseeable results of deliberate policy choices. The United Nations, international partners, and donor countries have played a crucial role in preventing a large-scale humanitarian catastrophe, and we express our sincere appreciation despite the many challenges and impediments. However, humanitarian assistance is not a sustainable solution. It cannot substitute for political legitimacy, responsible

governance, or sustainable economic recovery. The recent decline in humanitarian funding, against a backdrop of persistent and growing needs, is deeply alarming.

Madam President,

The Taliban, who were themselves a primary driver of instability over the past two decades, now speak of bringing security and stability. Yet their actions tell a very different story. A nation has effectively been pushed into isolation and taken hostage by a male-dominated group, ruling through coercion, centralized authority, and a distorted interpretation of Islam, against the will of the Afghan people. The proliferation of radical madrassas, the suppression of inclusive education, the consolidation of power through repression, kidnapping and hostage-taking of Afghan and international citizens, and the continued links with and presence of international terrorist groups on Afghanistan's soil are creating dangerous conditions for insecurity and instability in Afghanistan in the region and beyond.

Contrary to commitments made under the Doha Agreement, the Taliban have provided a permissive environment for international terrorist groups. This was once again confirmed in the sixteenth report of the Security Council's Sanctions Monitoring Team. This endangers, first and foremost, the people of Afghanistan and poses a serious threat to regional and international security. We are already witnessing the dangerous spillover of these dynamics.

The continued Pakistani airstrikes since 22 February have resulted in civilian casualties and escalating tensions, with exchanges of artillery, drones, and ground assaults. According to UNAMA, as of 7 March there have been at least 185 civilian casualties, 55 percent of whom were women and children. Such actions are unacceptable and must come to an immediate halt. Let me be clear: just as the Taliban do not represent Afghanistan, its people, its culture, or its authentic Islamic values, the violence arising from their policies, including the harboring of terrorist groups, does not represent the will of the Afghan nation.

As we stated in our official complaint submitted to this Council on 22 February, we call on this Council to address this aggression and urge Pakistan to immediately cease strikes against civilian areas and vital infrastructure in Afghanistan, including facilities representing two decades of investment by the Afghan people. Such actions constitute a violation of territorial integrity and the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law, and the norms of good-neighborly relations.

We unequivocally condemn terrorism in all its forms, including its instrumentalization, sponsorship, and the provision of safe havens. Terrorism is our common enemy. Counterterrorism must be genuine, non-selective, and grounded in a comprehensive strategy consistent with international law, including international humanitarian law. The Afghan people have suffered from terrorism for decades and must not once again become victims of irresponsible and politicized policies and proxy wars. Combating terrorism in Afghanistan can

only be achieved through a responsible, legitimate, and inclusive government, one that reflects the will of the Afghan people and honors Afghanistan's international obligations.

Madam President,

After five years, the status quo in Afghanistan is neither acceptable nor sustainable. Efforts under so-called pragmatic engagement to normalize or accommodate this reality will not bring peace, stability, or prosperity. What is needed now is renewed and coordinated international engagement under the leadership of the United Nations, with the support of this Council, to facilitate the emergence of a legitimate and inclusive political and constitutional order grounded in the will and aspirations of the Afghan people. Any essential engagement with the Taliban must remain principled and conditional, linked to measurable progress on human rights, inclusive governance, and counterterrorism. Accountability mechanisms, including the Independent Investigative Mechanism in Geneva, and humanitarian and economic assistance to Afghan people must be supported. In this regard, the role of UNAMA remains essential. As we consider the renewal of its mandate, we express appreciation to the UNAMA team for their continued efforts and support the extension of its mandate.

At the same time, a strong and effective mandate, together with the appointment of a capable, impartial, and dedicated Special Representative of the Secretary-General committed to human rights principles, will be critical to ensuring the balanced implementation of all three pillars of the mandate, including the political component. The Security Council has a central responsibility. What is required is a unified, principled, and coherent approach. Only through such an approach can we help create the conditions for the emergence of a responsible, accountable, and inclusive government that respects the fundamental rights of all Afghans, including women and girls, and fulfills Afghanistan's international obligations.

Madam President,

Allow me to conclude by outlining what the people of Afghanistan seek.

They seek a country where every child can go to school. They seek a system where women can work, learn, and live with dignity. They seek accountability for those who torture, execute, and oppress, not impunity. They seek counterterrorism measures that are principled and lawful, not selective and politicized. They seek governance that reflects Afghanistan's diversity, not one that excludes. These are aspirations of Afghan people. These are universal rights. These are the commitments Afghanistan accepted when it joined this Organization in November 1946. We committed ourselves to faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women. And those commitments do not expire because the Taliban say so. The people of Afghanistan, who have endured decades of conflict and hardship, deserve peace, dignity, justice, and hope. Our collective responsibility is to stand with them and ensure that Afghanistan moves toward enduring peace, stability, and prosperity. Thank you.