



Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

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Mr. President,

Congratulations on assuming the Presidency, and thank you for convening this meeting. We wish to thank France and other signatories for their strong statement this morning in solidarity with Afghan women and girls as well as the statement issued under Danish Presidency last month on the 5th anniversary of illegitimate Taliban's rule in support of Afghan people. I thank Deputy Special Representative Georgette Gagnon for her briefing and UNAMA's continued work under difficult circumstances, and Mrs. Nargis Nehan of Farageer for her insights. We also warmly congratulate Ms. Rabab Fatima for her appointment as the SRSG. As we have just marked the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, we honor the memory of all those who lost their precious lives, as well as the Afghans and international partners who made the ultimate sacrifice in the fight against terrorism.

Last month also marked five years since the Taliban seized power by force — long enough to judge the situation by actions and outcomes, not promises. Despite sustained international and UN engagement, Afghanistan's humanitarian, human rights, political and security crises continue to deepen. The Council has taken important steps. **Resolution 2615 (2021)** established a humanitarian exemption; **Resolution 2679 (2023)** mandated an independent assessment for a more coherent international approach; and **Resolution 2721 (2023)** called for a UN Special Envoy to advance its recommendations, including a political process.

Yet the Taliban have continued to disregard the legitimate demands of the Afghan people and repeated calls of the international community. Nationwide armed conflict has declined, but the absence of large-scale war should not be mistaken for sustainable peace. Armed opposition has become increasingly visible in several parts of Afghanistan, particularly in the northern and northeastern provinces, including Badakhshan. It is also important to note that current Afghan armed opposition groups, unlike Taliban, have generally not resorted to suicide attacks or indiscriminate IEDs targeting civilians.

The Secretary-General's report makes clear that beneath apparent stability, serious risks continue to accumulate.

Mr. President,

Five issues require particular attention.

First, Afghanistan faces a profound crisis of political legitimacy and governance.

Five years on, there is still no inclusive political system, no accepted constitutional framework, and no accountable institutions through which Afghans can influence decisions affecting their lives. Political parties remain banned, political figures face restrictions, including house arrest, and meaningful political dialogue continues to be rejected. Power remains highly centralized. Even those often described as “moderate” or dissatisfied Taliban figures in Kabul have been unable or unwilling to meaningfully challenge policies imposed by the leadership.

Control of territory is not political legitimacy. Legitimacy cannot be built through force, discrimination and exclusion. Nor should claims of improved governance obscure credible reports of bribery, extortion, abuse of authority and interference in humanitarian assistance in the absence of independent oversight.

Second, the systematic exclusion of women and girls remains the clearest evidence of the Taliban's violation of their commitments and of our collective failure.

UNESCO estimates that 2.4 million Afghan girls remain excluded from secondary education. Afghanistan remains the only country in the world where women and girls are formally denied education beyond the primary level. Women continue to face severe restrictions on employment, movement and participation in public life. Afghan women working for the United Nations remain barred from UN premises, while restrictions on female humanitarian workers undermine assistance delivery. The Taliban have also expanded religious madrasas as an alternative to formal education, raising concern among Afghans about radicalization. This is not only a women's rights crisis. It is a national crisis affecting Afghanistan's economy, health, education, development and long-term stability.

No political process can claim legitimacy while women are excluded from decisions about their country's future. We urge all Member States, particularly countries of the Islamic world, to remain clear and united: the denial of the fundamental rights of Afghan women and girls cannot be justified in the name of religion, tradition, or culture, as the Taliban have sought to do. Engagement must never become acceptance of institutionalized discrimination.

Third, the broader human rights situation remains deeply troubling.

Between May and July alone, UNAMA documented 12 killings, 13 arbitrary arrests and detentions, and three cases of torture or ill-treatment involving former officials and former security personnel, despite the proclaimed general amnesty. Journalists continue to face detention, media outlets are suspended or censored, corporal punishment is carried out, and civic space remains severely restricted.

We are also deeply concerned by increasing pressure on Hazara and Shia communities, including the detention of religious and community figures, interference with religious observances, discrimination, and the appropriation of land and property.

Reports of targeted killings and reprisals continue. In recent days, a former judge was reportedly shot dead in Kabul; two former security personnel were reportedly tortured and beheaded in Takhar; and other killings were reported in Kabul, Uruzgan and Herat. Every such case requires a credible and independent investigation. The Taliban cannot credibly claim to provide security while people can be killed, detained, tortured, or disappeared without accountability.

Fourth, terrorism remains a serious threat to Afghanistan, the region and beyond.

The Secretary-General notes continuing concern over terrorist groups operating from Afghanistan, while the Security Council's Monitoring Team has reported the presence of more than twenty terrorist groups. Taliban assurances that Afghan territory will not be used to threaten other countries must therefore be judged by measurable and verifiable action, not statements. Afghanistan must never again become a safe haven, recruitment centre or operational base for international terrorism.

At the same time, legitimate counterterrorism concerns cannot justify military actions that kill Afghan civilians or violate Afghanistan's territorial integrity. Such concerns can only be addressed sustainably through legitimate, accountable, and effective governance. Afghanistan must not become the battlefield for the security disputes of others.

Fifth, the humanitarian and economic crisis remains severe.

Twenty-three million people need humanitarian assistance and 13.8 million face acute food insecurity, while the 2026 Humanitarian Response Plan is only 29.9 per cent funded. Nearly 1.15 million Afghans returned between January and August this year, many involuntarily, following approximately 2.9 million returns in 2025, into communities already struggling with unemployment, food insecurity and weak services.

We call on all States to respect non-refoulement. Returns must be voluntary, safe and dignified, with special protection for women at risk, human rights defenders, journalists, former officials and former security personnel. We also appeal to donors: do not abandon the Afghan people because of the policies of those who rule them. Humanitarian assistance must continue, but it cannot permanently substitute for a functioning economy, legitimate institutions and responsible governance.

Mr. President,

Five years of experience also require an honest assessment of international policy. Isolation alone has not produced change. Neither has engagement without clear political objectives. This false choice between isolation and normalization must end. What is needed is principled, coordinated and outcome-oriented engagement with a clear political destination: legitimate, representative and accountable governance through a genuine intra-Afghan political process.

This Council has repeatedly supported such an approach. We believe the time has come to implement the recommendations of the independent assessment, including the appointment of a UN Special Envoy, and we hope the ongoing Strategic Review will strengthen UNAMA's political role. But no durable outcome can emerge from engagement between the Taliban and foreign governments alone. Afghanistan is broader than the Taliban. We therefore reiterate our call for a genuinely Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political process, facilitated by the United Nations and supported by regional and international partners, meaningfully including Afghan women, civil society, political and democratic forces, youth, ethnic and religious communities, and other credible Afghan stakeholders. Afghans must be participants, not spectators, in decisions about their future.

Last month, our Mission conducted voluntary and anonymous consultations with Afghans inside the country and abroad. Among respondents inside Afghanistan, 86 per cent said their lives had deteriorated over the past five years; 76 per cent identified legitimate, inclusive and accountable governance as a priority; 71 per cent called for UN support for an inclusive political process; and nearly two-thirds emphasized meaningful Afghan participation in national dialogue. Their message is clear: Afghans want rights, representation, accountable institutions, education and opportunity — and above all, a meaningful role in determining how their country is governed.

Mr. President,

We welcome the renewal of UNAMA's mandate and look forward to the Strategic Review. Its humanitarian and human rights roles are essential, but so is its political role. UNAMA should help create the conditions for a political solution. I therefore urge this Council and the broader international community to maintain **five priorities**: a cohesive international approach; protection of the rights and meaningful participation of women and girls; support for a genuine Afghan-led political process; sustained attention to terrorism, human rights and accountability; and continued humanitarian assistance and protection for vulnerable Afghans.

Afghanistan must not be abandoned to an indefinite status quo—not only because of what is at stake for the Afghan people, but also because of the implications for international peace and security. Afghans are not asking the international community to choose their leaders. They are asking for the right to choose their own future.

Thank you, Mr. President.