Afghan Women’s Open Letter to the United Nations Security Council Members

To stop the slaughter of Afghan children the United Nations must finally investigate and hold to account external supporters of terrorism.

Excellencies:

On August 15, Kawsar left home with a dream to become a doctor. She was studying in a university preparatory course. She had lost her father to war when she was 2 years old and at the age of 18 she joined a class of 120 other young girls and boys who had similar dreams to pass the university entrance exam. At 5 o’clock in the afternoon, the bodies of these young hopefuls were scattered around their classroom, blown up by a suicide bomber of the same age, and all those dreams were shattered.

While the newspaper headlines report our losses in numbers, these numbers are actually our children: young women and men losing their lives, and our children are learning to live in fear. All this continues to happen in clear violation of international humanitarian and human rights law which should protect civilians in armed conflict, especially women and children.

Suicide attacks and bombings in Afghanistan have taken at least 1500 Afghan lives in the past week. In the past four years, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) documented consecutive record high levels of civilian casualties, a trend that has continued well into 2018. From 1 January to 30 June 2018, UNAMA documented 5,122 civilian casualties (1,692 deaths and 3,430 injured). Behind these numbers are thousands more shattered lives.

In light of the latest wave of increased violence and targeted killing of innocent civilians across Afghanistan, we women of Afghanistan are writing to urge the United Nations Security Council’s (UNSC) members to stand in unity with Afghans and take a strong stance to hold accountable states who are in a way affiliated with, or supporting, aiding and abetting terrorist groups that are waging war against innocent Afghan civilians, especially women and children.

We ask the UNSC members to assign an international team to start investigating the recent attacks in Afghanistan, including allegations into the involvement of foreign states that have been made by the Afghan government at the United Nations multiple times. We know there are regional interests and proxies going on in Afghanistan for whom our lives do not matter. Those responsible continue to plot and carry out these heinous acts safe in the knowledge that they will not be prosecuted or held accountable, and are emboldened by receiving support to continue inflicting pain and sorrow upon us. This must stop and it must stop now.

We understand that the United Nations in Afghanistan is promoting a peace process, and as victims of this conflict peace is our ultimate dream. In order to reach a peaceful end to the conflict, those responsible for any form of aiding and abetting terrorism should be investigated and held accountable. We ask the United Nations Security Council to provide a stronger mandate to UNAMA in calling for justice & ensuring the voices of the people in the peace process. We demand that the
sacrifices of our security forces, and the sacrifice of those women and men serving on behalf of members of this council be remembered and honored with decisive action to end the violence and bloodshed.

Undersigned by:

Members of the Afghan Women’s Network (AWN)
Women & Peace Studies Organization (WPSO- Afghanistan)
Co-Chair of the Women Peace & Security Working Group
Afghan Women Skills Development Center (AWSDC)
Afghan Women’s Education Center (AWEC)
Conflict Analysts Network (CAN-Afghanistan)
Voice of Afghan Women (VAW-Afghanistan)
Member of the Civil Society Joint Working Group
Modern Education for Development (MODE- Afghanistan)
Regional Campaigner for Amnesty International, South Asia
Paywand Afghanan
Organization for Research in Peace & Solidarity
Members of the Afghanistan Human Rights Defenders Committee
Women & Children Legal Research Foundation (WCLRF)
International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)
Asila Wardak
Farkhuda Zahra Nadery
Belquis Ahmadi
Noorjahan Akbar
Maria Bashir
Hangama Anwari