



Agenda for Afghanistan

Human rights must be central to any settlement to the conflict

The national reconstruction of Afghanistan must include the development of institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. Any political settlement must be based on broad consultation and participation by the widest possible cross section of Afghan society, and must ensure the full protection and meaningful participation of women and all religious and ethnic groups.

■ Stop human rights abuses

Explicit guarantees must be given for an immediate end to serious abuses such as unlawful killings, including reprisal killings based on ethnic identity, arbitrary detentions, rape, torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

■ End discrimination against women

Systematic discrimination and violence against women must stop and measures must be taken to ensure full respect for women's fundamental human rights.

■ Deploy human rights monitors

Effective protection and verification of human rights should be incorporated in any settlement of the conflict. International human rights field monitors should be deployed throughout Afghanistan as soon as possible.

■ Provide food aid and other humanitarian assistance

All parties should ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

■ Don't arm human rights abusers

Governments must ensure that transfers of weapons and other military assistance are not used to commit human rights abuses. Disarmament and demining must be important components of any settlement, and must be adequately supported by the international community.

■ Stop the use of child soldiers

All child soldiers should be demobilized at once. They should be safely returned to their families and communities and fully reintegrated into civilian life.

■ Protect refugees

Neighbouring countries should keep their borders open to Afghan refugees. The international community should provide full support, in keeping with the principles of solidarity and responsibility-sharing. Groups with special protection needs such as children, the elderly and women should be given particular attention. The voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons is an important part of the process of national reconstruction, but voluntary repatriation must be in accordance with principles of international law.

■ End impunity

In a post-conflict Afghanistan, there must be a genuine commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights for all by those in positions of leadership. No amnesties, pardons or similar measures should be granted that would prevent the emergence of the truth. Perpetrators of human rights abuses should be brought to justice in accordance with international fair trial standards, and without recourse to the death penalty.

■ Rebuild the criminal justice system

An independent and impartial expert commission with sufficient resources and specific expertise in women's rights should be established to examine and advise on rebuilding the criminal justice system in Afghanistan in line with international human rights standards.

■ Provide international support

The UN and the international community must make a serious and long-term commitment to support institution-building and reconstruction in Afghanistan and to ensure that human rights protection and verification have a central place in the process.