AfP Statement on the Crisis in Afghanistan

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Washington, D.C., USA. – The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) calls on the U.S. and the international community to use all available means to slow the impending takeover of Kabul by the Taliban and provide an emergency humanitarian intervention, including robust human rights protection to ensure safe passage out of Afghanistan for our allies and partners, especially Afghan women leaders. The current political talks with the Taliban must secure a monitoring mission for human rights protections.

The violent conflict in Afghanistan is dire; major cities have fallen and the Taliban have entered Kabul, cutting off all access routes. Many of the most vulnerable Afghans who worked for the U.S. government and the international community have fled to Kabul. In the days and weeks leading up to this, the Taliban committed atrocities and potential war crimes, including assassinations of civil society and journalists, forced women to marry Taliban combatants, and executed government officials, police, and soldiers.

President Biden’s ultimate announcement of unconditional military withdrawal rendered the peace talks effectively futile. Additionally, the current and previous administrations failed to develop a comprehensive diplomatic and peacebuilding strategy that stabilized Afghanistan and complied with U.S. government laws, including Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and atrocities prevention agendas. More importantly, once the announcement was made to withdraw the military and subsequently NATO forces, no plans were developed to ensure our allies and partners, especially women leaders, were provided safe processing, transport and
resettlement out of Afghanistan. In a last ditch effort to protect Embassy staff, the U.S. is sending 5,000 troops to assist with evacuation, but they are not on the ground yet.

As the situation in Afghanistan deteriorates, AfP strongly urges the following:

1. **Spearhead an emergency humanitarian intervention**
   It is not good enough to ensure the evacuation of embassy staff. The U.S. and the international community must provide continued support, through a “do-no-harm” approach, to provide for the evacuation of allies, partners, and Afghans vulnerable to Taliban persecution.

   The U.S. government and the international community must secure evacuation of qualifying Afghans and their families, including those who worked for the U.S. government or U.S.-funded programs and those most at-risk. The most at-risk include Afghan women that serve as human right defenders, activists, journalists, and government officials and they must be allowed to safely seek Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs), Priority 1 (P1), Priority 2 (P2), or other immigration status or resettlement. Through an executive order, the U.S. government must announce P1 and P2 visa applications will be free of charge.

   The Administration must also reduce the administrative burdens for SIV, P1, and P2-eligible applicants that have already been vetted through their relationship/employment with the U.S. government and U.S.-based NGOs. Due to the unsafe conditions, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security must immediately grant temporary protected status for Afghans currently in the U.S. for 18 months--and extend the designation as necessary.

   The U.S. and the international community must significantly increase humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, including emergency food and medical aid to manage casualties and COVID-19. The international community must negotiate the creation of a viable safe corridor between Afghanistan and Pakistan that allows for evacuation and humanitarian assistance delivery. The international community must also help facilitate widespread coordination across existing individual humanitarian corridors created by aid organizations at the local level to scale up.

   The U.S., UN, and broader international community must work diplomatically with Afghanistan’s neighbors to rapidly increase protection of vulnerable
Afghans through open door refugee policies, funding for refugee camps and swift durable solution resettlement processing.

2. **Political solution and monitoring mission.**

The international community and the U.S. must call for a UN Security Council resolution that authorizes UN facilitation of a political solution in Afghanistan. The U.S.-led and Qatari-hosted process has failed. Now, a UN facilitator should be appointed and a new U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation should be installed to support the process.

Additionally, the U.S. government and international community must outline how they will monitor, prevent, and address human rights abuses and atrocities committed by the Taliban. The international community should create confidence building measures to hold the Taliban accountable, such as a joint de-escalation committee to investigate violence and human rights abuses. If the Taliban continue to commit atrocities, fail to commit to a ceasefire, or reject participation in a process towards a political solution, then the U.S. and international community must issue additional sanctions and travel bans, ensure pariah status, and undertake other delegitimizing and punitive measures.

With over 150 member organizations, AfP brings together the largest development organizations, most innovative academic institutions, and influential humanitarian and faith-based groups to harness collective action for peace. We build coalitions in key areas of strategy and policy to elevate the entire peacebuilding field, tackling issues too large for any one organization to address alone.