



Children play in the snow with an abandoned tank. Photo: Gulbuddin Elham/Oxfam.

# AFGHANISTAN AT A CROSSROADS

Recommendations for the UN Security Council on the 2014 UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) mandate

As Afghanistan prepares for Presidential elections and the withdrawal of international forces, insecurity is continuing to spread across the country with a devastating impact on civilians. UNAMA's role in advancing human rights, supporting humanitarian access and promoting peace and reconciliation efforts – particularly as they relate to the women, peace and security agenda in Afghanistan – must be strengthened in order to ensure the significant gains that have been made in the last decade are not lost.



AUSTRALIAN  
COUNCIL  
FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT



**act:onaid**

**act for peace**  
reduce poverty  
prevent conflicts  
protect refugees  
empower communities



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**  
Pakistan / Afghanistan



Cooperation Center for Afghanistan (CCA)  
مرکز تعاون افغانستان "میتا"

**iwda**  
international  
women's development  
agency inc.



**MAHBOBA'S  
PROMISE**  
An Australian Aid Organisation



**NORWEGIAN  
CHURCH AID**



**OXFAM**



**PTRO**



**TEARAUSTRALIA**

**WOMEN**  
PEACE & SECURITY  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
to advance a new paradigm for peace and  
security in Afghanistan that is inclusive of  
women's perspectives.



**Women  
Peace and  
Security  
Academic  
Collective**



**World Vision**

# INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan is at a crossroads. This year will be one of rapid change, as international military forces withdraw and the country prepares for Presidential and Provincial elections in April 2014. As a diverse group of civil society organisations working to support sustainable development, the promotion of justice and respect for human rights in Afghanistan, we are concerned that the significant gains that have been made in the last decade may be lost. At this time of transition and uncertainty it is critical that the UN Security Council fulfils its obligations towards the Afghan people in promoting security and stability. This briefing outlines key concerns of civil society organisations and puts forward suggested action for the consideration of UN Security Council members.

## UNAMA

The mandate for the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) established in Security Council Resolution 2096, will expire on 19 March 2014. The renewal of the UNAMA mandate is a key opportunity for the Security Council to send a strong signal of continued concern and attention to Afghanistan and to ensure UNAMA is fit for purpose going forward.

Irrespective of the outcome of the national elections in April and developments in the security situation on the ground, UNAMA will continue to play an important role in the security and development of Afghanistan. UNAMA's role in advancing human rights, monitoring rights violations (including recording civilian casualties), supporting independent humanitarian action, protecting the most vulnerable (including women and children) and promoting peace and reconciliation efforts – particularly as they relate to the women, peace and security agenda in Afghanistan – should, if anything, be strengthened in the future.

## Summary of recommendations

As international forces withdraw from Afghanistan and insecurity continues to spread, the UN Security Council must ensure UNAMA is fit for purpose. UNAMA must be mandated and resourced to increase its focus on mitigating civilian casualties and child protection issues, promote full advancement of the women peace and security agenda in Afghanistan, monitor and help to address human rights violations, and improve aid access and civil society engagement. The UN Security Council can do this by incorporating the following recommendations and language suggestions into the upcoming resolution on the 2014 UNAMA mandate.

## Recommendations for UN Security Council

The UN Security Council should act to:

### **Minimise civilian casualties**

- *Express serious concern* with the **increase in civilian deaths** and injuries, particularly of children, documented in the 6 December 2013 Secretary General's report on Afghanistan and *reaffirm* the Security Council's commitment to support Afghan Security Forces to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians from harm during military operations, particularly as security and political transition accelerates to its conclusion in 2014.
- *Request* UNAMA to support the **Civilian Casualties Tracking Team established in the Presidential Information Coordination Centre**, which is currently under-performing.
- *Request* UNAMA to strengthen its role working with armed opposition groups (AOGs) on adhering to international humanitarian law.

### **Advance the women peace and security agenda**

- *Request* UNAMA improve the collection and use of **sex disaggregated data** when reporting against benchmarks in quarterly Secretary General's reports on Afghanistan.
- *Request* UNAMA to support implementation of the **National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA)** and call on the Afghan government to increase its efforts to finalise the forthcoming Afghanistan National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.
- *Express serious concern* about the **persistence of targeted attacks on Afghan women leaders and public figures**, *condemn* these attacks in the strongest terms and *urge* the Afghan government and its international partners to improve efforts to prevent such crimes and bring perpetrators to justice, in line with the 2009 Elimination of Violence Against Women Law.
- *Note* with concern the low numbers of female provincial council candidates for the April 2014 election, and *request* UNAMA support the government and civil society in advancing civic education to **increase women's political participation**.
- *Welcome* the Afghan government's commitment to prioritise human rights and gender in its police reform efforts, as set out in the Ministry of Interior's **Ten-Year Vision for the Afghan National Police**, including the Afghan government's commitment to reaching ten per cent female participation rates in the Afghan National Police (ANP) by 2024. *Call on* the international community to support the funding of female police training, recruitment and facilities.
- *Acknowledge* UNAMA's good work **supporting women police associations** and stress that this should continue.
- *Urge* international donors to support the Afghan government to address the structural barriers and social attitudes which hinder Afghan women's participation in the police force and develop and implement a national strategy to recruit and retain female police.
- *Stress* the need for the Afghan government and international partners to increase/redouble efforts to **ensure sufficient female police and searchers are available to enable women to safely exercise their rights to vote** in the 2014 Presidential and Provincial elections, as per the requirements of the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan.

### ***Protect children in armed conflict***

- *Reiterate its strong condemnation of **attacks against schools, education and health facilities***, and urge all parties to immediately cease attacks on, and military use of, such facilities.
- *Express continued concern about the **abduction and detention of children** by parties to the conflict for purposes including recruitment, intimidation and sexual abuse, and call for the immediate release of such children in accordance with applicable international law as well as rehabilitation and integration efforts;*
- *Reiterate its request for Member States to provide adequate resources to enable the Secretary General and UNAMA to give priority to **supporting child protection activities** in Afghanistan in line with resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict.*

### ***Address human rights violations***

- *Request UNAMA to **continue recording human rights abuses** across Afghanistan and share this information publicly.*
- *Express concern at the **level of abuse committed by members of the Afghan Local Police (ALP)** and call on the Afghan government to ensure that ALP recruits are more thoroughly vetted, trained and independently monitored so that any allegations of human rights abuses are transparently investigated and appropriately disciplined and/or prosecuted.*
- *Request UNAMA to **further support the independence and effectiveness of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC)**, including by assisting the Police Ombudsman's office to expand its operations nationwide.*

### ***Address access and integration issues***

- *Request a **clear distinction between the relief and political roles of the UN in Afghanistan**, critical in order to strengthen the UN's ability to respond to populations in need at a time when humanitarian and development needs remain high and when the operating space is shrinking.*
- *Call on all stakeholders including UNAMA, the Afghan government and all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan to **respect humanitarian principles and ensure that the operating space** within which people can access assistance is expanded.*

### ***Promote civil society engagement***

- *Request UNAMA to increase its support to peace and reconciliation efforts led by civil society.*
- *Express concern that the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) has not been holding regular meetings and *call upon* all relevant actors to enhance their cooperation with the JCMB in this regard, with a view to further improve its efficiency and engagement with civil society.*
- *Consider how UNAMA will engage with civil society moving forwards and whether it will continue to play a facilitating role.*

# SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Insecurity is continuing to spread across the country with a devastating impact on civilians. Between 1 August and 31 October, UNAMA recorded 2,572 civilian casualties, bringing the total for the first 10 months of 2013 to 7,394 (2,568 deaths and 4,826 injuries). This represents a 13 per cent rise compared with the same period in 2012.<sup>1</sup> In the first 6 months of 2013 there was a staggering 61 per cent increase in female casualties compared with the same period in 2012.<sup>2</sup> A high proportion of casualties have been caused by AOGs.

Afghanistan ranks 175th out of 187 countries in the 2012 Human Development Index.<sup>3</sup> With an estimated population of close to 30 million and GDP at US\$19.91 billion, Afghanistan is one of the least developed countries in the world and has an estimated 36 per cent of the population living below the poverty line.<sup>4</sup> The vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis is extremely high,<sup>5</sup> and there are a number of worrying signs about the trajectory of conflict:

- The conflict more broadly has shifted to targeting civilians, particularly those with any affiliations to government, including police, politicians and senior officials, as well as human rights activists, elders and mullahs. All are viewed as legitimate targets by AOG.
- Women and girls continue to be particularly vulnerable, with their freedom of movement increasingly restricted in AOG-controlled and highly unstable areas. Reported violence against women and girls is on the rise, with Afghan women officials and female human rights defenders particular targets.<sup>6</sup> There are also reports of abuse of young boys which is likely underreported.<sup>7</sup>
- Afghan children continue to suffer, with children being killed and maimed by conflict-related violence. UNAMA continues to report incidences of children being recruited into armed forces and groups, as well as attacks against educational facilities.<sup>8</sup>
- Afghanistan continues to rank among the most violent contexts for aid operations. Aid workers in Afghanistan continue to face significant security risks. For example in August 2013, AOG gunmen shot dead six local staff working for an international NGO in Herat.<sup>9</sup> At the start of December 2013 there had been 217 incidents against aid workers, with 29 deaths, 71 injuries and 111 abductions.<sup>10</sup> While these figures highlight the general security risks, there are also parts of the country where NGOs can operate with an acceptable threshold of risk.
- Criminality continues to increase, rising by 36 per cent in 2013, with a record opium crop and criminality further contributing to destabilisation.<sup>11</sup> The number of security incidents in the 2013 eradication campaign was much greater, with AOG and farmers resistance resulting in 143 deaths and 93 injuries.<sup>12</sup>
- More than 112,000 people have become internally displaced by fighting or disasters in the first 10 months of 2013, bringing the total number of IDPs to just over 631,000 according to the UNHCR.<sup>13</sup> Afghan government estimates are much higher,<sup>14</sup> and IDP numbers are predicted to grow in 2014.

# KEY ISSUES FOR SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

## Minimising civilian casualties

UNAMA has highlighted concerns about the capacity of ANSF to put in place effective measures to protect civilians, particularly during ground engagements and armed clashes. Strikingly there has been a 36 per cent increase in civilian casualties during ground engagements between pro-government forces and AOGs, and a 52 per cent increase in the eastern region of Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup> Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) continue to be widely used as an indiscriminate weapon of war by AOGs, particularly affecting children.

The Afghan government has demonstrated its willingness to replicate ISAF's Civilian Casualty Tracking Cell within the ANSF. In May 2012 the Afghan government created the Civilian Casualties Tracking Team, which was established in the Presidential Information Coordination Centre and in October 2013 it appointed an advisor to President Karzai on the protection of civilians. Whilst these efforts are a positive first step, they have not yet led to sufficient mitigation and accountability for civilian casualties and related harm. The international community should accelerate efforts to assist the Afghan government to create an independent and effective mechanism for proactively monitoring and investigating civilian deaths and injuries and in providing full reparations. ISAF and the ANSF must drastically step up efforts if such a unit is to be in place and working effectively by 2014.

With such a high proportion of civilian casualties being caused by AOGs and with the potential for this trend to continue throughout 2014, it is vital that AOGs are urged to adhere to international humanitarian law (IHL) and that they fulfil their obligations. UNAMA should continue in 2014 to track and document casualties of the conflict, by all parties, and regularly report with a particular focus on AOGs/AGEs and ANSF to ensure they are meeting their legal obligations under IHL.

To minimise civilian casualties and promote accountability, the Security Council should:

- *Express serious concern* with the **increase in civilian deaths** and injuries, particularly of children, documented in the 6 December 2013 Secretary General's report on Afghanistan and *reaffirm* the Security Council's commitment to support Afghan Security Forces to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians from harm during military operations, particularly as security and political transition accelerates to its conclusion in 2014.
- *Request* UNAMA to support the **Civilian Casualties Tracking Team established in the Presidential Information Coordination Centre**, which is currently under-performing. An independent and effective mechanism to monitor and investigate civilian deaths and injuries proactively and provide full reparations is urgently required.
- *Request* UNAMA to strengthen its role working with AOGs on adhering to international humanitarian law.

## Women, peace and security

The situation facing women and girls in Afghanistan remains dire. Violence against women and girls remains widespread and impunity for violations remains high. The number of reported cases increased by 28 per cent in October 2012 to October 2013, with few prosecutions and mediation increasingly being used as a tool to resolve domestic violence and abuse – often to the detriment of women.<sup>16</sup>

Women's political participation also remains low. The Afghan government reduced the quota of female provincial candidates from 25 to 20 per cent in 2013; however out of the 2,704 provincial candidates, only 11.4 per cent are women. Unlike the previous Presidential and Parliamentary elections, there has been an absence of civic education efforts which have been successful in the past for raising awareness and tackling low participation rates. Such efforts include capacity building and training for female candidates as well as media and public relations support to female candidates.

Looking ahead to the 2015 Parliamentary elections, it is imperative that more women are supported and encouraged to participate in political life, and security measures are put in place to allow them to do so safely. To ensure that civic education efforts lead to sustainable improvements for women, it is critical for religious leaders, *shuras* and other key stakeholders to be engaged in such efforts.

Women also face enormous structural barriers to participation and leadership in the police force, with women making up less than 1 per cent of the Afghan National Police force. Although female police are vital for Afghan women to be able to report crimes and access desperately needed justice, few women in Afghanistan will ever encounter one. An enormous effort is required to address barriers to women's participation, including security issues, educational, economic and cultural barriers as well as discrimination and harassment in the police force.<sup>17</sup>



Naseema and Nodia, policewomen who patrol Kabul's "Women's Garden".  
Photo: Nick Danziger /Oxfam



The current resolution for UNAMA (UNSC Res 2096) has a number of strong provisions relating to the promotion and protection of women's rights as well as reporting on progress in this area. In the resolution the Security Council recognises that:

*"...despite progress achieved on gender equality, enhanced efforts, including on measurable and action oriented objectives, are necessary to secure the rights of women and girls and to ensure all women and girls in Afghanistan are protected from violence and abuse, enjoy equal protection under the law and equal access to justice".<sup>18</sup>*

The resolution does not specify any "measurable and action oriented objectives" and stops short from mandating UNAMA to develop and report against them.

Nevertheless, UNAMA has done a great deal of important work promoting women's rights in Afghanistan. For example, UNAMA has played a vital role supporting policewomen's associations to convene, discuss priorities and affect change within their police stations. The Afghan Women's Network, with support from UNAMA, helped the police women's council in Bamiyan to advocate for separate toilets for policewomen and a kindergarten for their children – all approved by the Chief of Police. Whilst civil society organisations and EUPOL also provide similar support to groups in other parts of the country, there are only six police women's councils across Afghanistan. It is vital that UNAMA continues to support the establishment and operation of these councils, and that it is clearly mandated by the UNSC to do so.

To enhance the effectiveness of UNAMA's role promoting and protecting women's rights in Afghanistan, the Security Council should:

- *Request* UNAMA improve the collection and use of **sex disaggregated data** when reporting against benchmarks in quarterly Secretary General's reports on Afghanistan. This includes comprehensive reporting on levels of women's representation and participation in all formal peace processes relating to Afghanistan, including peace *jirgas*; as well as participation of women in the ANSF.
- *Request* UNAMA to support implementation of the **National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan** (NAPWA) and call on the Afghan government to increase its efforts to finalise the forthcoming Afghanistan National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.
- *Express* serious concern about the **persistence of targeted attacks on Afghan women leaders and public figures**, *condemn* these attacks in the strongest terms and *urge* the Afghan government and its international partners to improve efforts to prevent such crimes and bring perpetrators to justice, in line with the 2009 Elimination of Violence Against Women Law.
- *Note* with concern the low numbers of female provincial council candidates for the April 2014 election, and request UNAMA support the government and civil society in advancing civic education to **increase women's political participation** working with religious leaders, community elders and *shuras*.

In 2014 UNAMA should also be specifically mandated to focus greater attention on the promotion of gender sensitive security sector reform, particularly relating to police. The Security Council should:

- *Welcome* the Afghan government's commitment to prioritise human rights and gender in its police reform efforts, as set out in the Ministry of Interior's **Ten-Year Vision for the Afghan National Police**, including the Afghan government's commitment to reaching ten per cent female participation rates in the Afghan National Police (ANP) by 2024. Call on the international community to support the funding of female police training, recruitment and facilities for female police and the staffing of Family Response Units (FRUs) with qualified policewomen and female legal advisers;
- *Acknowledge* UNAMA's good work **supporting women police associations** and stress that this should continue, especially in light of possible decreases of EUPOL and other bilateral police mission mentoring.
- *Urge* international donors to support the Afghan government to address the structural barriers and social attitudes which hinder Afghan women's participation in the police force and **develop and implement a national strategy to recruit and retain female police**. We suggest that special efforts be made to raise awareness in different Afghan ethnic groups about the importance of the role of women and send women policewomen for training to Muslim countries as has been done for teachers.
- *Stress* the need for the Afghan government and international partners to escalate efforts to **ensure sufficient female police and searchers are available to enable women to safely exercise their rights to vote** in the 2014 Presidential and Provincial elections, as per the requirements of the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan.

## Children and armed conflict

Boys and girls comprise the majority of the civilian population in Afghanistan – 57 per cent by some estimates.<sup>19</sup> There is a critical need for sustained commitment to preventing and addressing violations of children's rights, particularly concerning education. Otherwise, ongoing conflict and insecurity will not only impact on the safety and development of the current generation of Afghan children, but future generations too.

The December 2013 Secretary General's Report on Afghanistan highlights some of the ongoing risks Afghan children face in light of protracted conflict and uncertainty. There has been a 6 per cent reduction in the number of child casualties in the first ten months of 2013 compared with the previous period, but there has been a concerning 23 per cent increase in the number of children injured during this period.<sup>20</sup> Of significant concern is a 67 per cent increase in child casualties from shelling and cross-fire during ground engagements.<sup>21</sup>

Despite positive developments for children's resilience and safety, such as increased school attendance among children, especially girls, UNAMA has documented ongoing attacks against educational facilities, including 23 armed attacks in 2013.<sup>22</sup> The Secretary General also continues to report incidences of children being abducted, detained and recruited by all parties

to the conflict, as well as being subjected to intimidation and sexual violence.<sup>23</sup>

The current resolution for UNAMA (UNSC Res 2096) reiterates the Council's condemnation of the grave violations against children and the need to hold perpetrators to account.<sup>24</sup> It calls on the Secretary General to continue to report on this matter in line with relevant Security Council resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict. It also explicitly calls for the Afghan government's full implementation of the Action Plan (and Annex) on Children Associated with National Security Forces in Afghanistan in cooperation with UNAMA.<sup>25</sup>



Patients wait to see medical staff at the Maternity Unit at the Ahmed Shah Baba Hospital in Kabul. The hospital serves hundreds of thousands of people displaced by conflict in insecure regions in Afghanistan. Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam.

To enhance UNAMA's role in strengthening the Government of Afghanistan's measures to implement this Action and Plan and address other child protection issues, we recommend that the Security Council:

- *Reiterate its strong condemnation of **attacks against schools**, education and health facilities, and *urge all parties* to immediately cease attacks on, and military use of, such facilities.*
- *Express continued concern about the **abduction and detention of children** by parties to the conflict for purposes including recruitment, intimidation and sexual abuse, and *call for* the immediate release of such children in accordance with applicable international law as well as rehabilitation and integration efforts.*
- *Reiterate its request for Member States to provide adequate resources to enable the Secretary General and UNAMA to give **priority to supporting child protection activities in Afghanistan** in line with resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict.*

## Accountability for human rights violations

UNAMA's Human Rights Unit continues to work on the protection of civilians, documenting and verifying allegations of human rights abuses with 90 officers placed across the country. Beyond recording civilian casualties this includes cases of violence against women, forced and child marriage and detention issues including torture and other ill-treatment. This is an important aspect of UNAMA's work which many Afghans recognise as a vital part of transitional justice.

Some elements of the Afghan Local Police (ALP) have been widely criticised for committing human rights violations with impunity across the country, and particularly in the north-east and east.<sup>26</sup> Combating abusive conduct on the part of the ALP and the climate of impunity in which abuse takes place, as well as improving the government's response to civilian harm caused, is a moral, political and legal imperative both for the international community and the Afghan government.

To improve the documentation and redress of human rights violations, the UN Security Council should:

- *Request* UNAMA to continue **recording human rights abuses** across Afghanistan and share this information publicly. With the closure of some sub-offices it is vital UNAMA is able to collect and record information which is representative of the country, in order to better understand trends, and as a compelling contribution toward any future transitional justice processes.
- *Express concern* at the **level of abuse committed by members of the ALP** and call on the Afghan government to ensure that ALP recruits are more thoroughly vetted, trained and independently monitored so that any allegations of human rights abuses are transparently investigated and those responsible are held to account.
- *Request* UNAMA to **further support the independence and effectiveness of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC)**, including by assisting the Police Ombudsman's office to expand its operations nationwide. This will help enhance civilian oversight of the Afghan National Police and improve the accountability of investigations into complaints.

## Access issues and the integrated mission

An increase in insecurity and criminality has led many NGOs as well as key donors and United Nations agencies to review their ways of working and operational set-up in Afghanistan. There is recognition that with the withdrawal of ISAF troops, NGOs will need to engage in more structured dialogue with AOGs, and indeed some aid NGOs have begun to do so.

In general, NGOs will still face significant difficulties reaching populations in need. Beyond responding to emergencies, there is a tendency for NGOs to stay in areas where they are well established and accepted, and there is limited ability to operate in areas where NGOs have not been historically present. It is therefore not always easy to scale up humanitarian interventions in the areas of greatest need and in particular the most insecure areas of the country.

UNAMA has a 'triple-hatted' Humanitarian Coordinator, Resident Coordinator and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG), which has been the subject of much debate in Afghanistan. Many humanitarians consider that in practice humanitarian functions are subordinated to the other two roles. The political mission has not been able to separate itself from relief efforts, despite OCHA relocating to a different compound in Kabul. The integrated UN mission has caused significant problems for UN humanitarian agencies as a result of the perceived de facto association between UNAMA and international military forces.

Moving forward there may be significant concerns about the UN's ability to maintain a field presence as international forces withdraw. In 2014, as insecurity and humanitarian needs increase, it will be more important than ever to have a strong and independent UN humanitarian role – separate, and perceived as separate from the overall political UNAMA mission. Support for OCHA's continued strategic and physical independence from UNAMA is to be encouraged, as is the separation of the function of Humanitarian Coordinator in Afghanistan from that of Resident Coordinator and DSRSG.

To address these issues, the UN Security Council should:

- **Request a clear distinction between the relief and political roles of the UN** in Afghanistan, critical in order to strengthen the UN's ability to respond to populations in need at a time when humanitarian and development needs remain high and when the operating space is shrinking. This will be critical in order to strengthen the UN's ability to respond to populations in need at a time when humanitarian and development needs remain high and when the operating space is shrinking.
- **Call on** all stakeholders including UNAMA, the Afghan government and all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan to respect humanitarian principles and ensure that the operating space within which people can access assistance, is expanded.

## Civil society engagement

UNAMA has been supporting efforts on peace and reconciliation through the Afghan People's Dialogue on Peace which is working with 13 civil society organisations and the AIHRC. UNAMA has provided support to the steering committee and helped to facilitate discussions across Afghanistan. This process has been ongoing since 2011, however there still remains a lack of support for broader peace and reconciliation efforts, and a neutral platform which can support bottom-up efforts. Whilst the High Peace Council is providing some outlet for reconciliation and receives UNDP support, many Afghans perceive the Council to be partisan. Civil society can play a unique role in facilitating grassroots-level peace and reconciliation efforts, however little support has been received from donors or UNAMA in this regard.

Ahead of the 2012 Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan, UNAMA facilitated the convening and meetings of a joint civil society working group in a process which continued beyond the conference. To some degree this process duplicated existing coordination mechanisms among civil society, and many CSOs abstained from involvement as they felt UNAMA politicised the process. In addition, in November 2013, UNDP established a civil society advisory committee.

Greater clarity and improved coordination is needed between UN agencies to prevent duplication and to ensure civil society is aware of the aims and agendas of different UN agencies in convening different meetings, particularly in the run up to the international conference in late 2014, to be hosted by the UK.

The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Body (JCMB) coordinates and monitors the implementation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, the National Priority Programs, the Kabul Process and the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. While the JCMB involves civil society, it has not been regularly meeting: the last meeting was held on 12 February 2013 and the next Special JCMB session is scheduled for 29 Jan 2014. The lack of meeting regularity undermines the JCMB's coordination and monitoring ability. As co-chair of the JCMB, UNAMA should work to ensure its coherence and functionality.

To address these coordination challenges and ensure civil society is able to meaningfully participate in the future development and peace and reconciliations processes in Afghanistan, the UN Security Council should:

- *Request* UNAMA to increase its support to peace and reconciliation efforts led by civil society.
- *Express concern* that the JCMB have not been holding regular meetings, and *call upon* all relevant actors to enhance their cooperation with the JCMB in this regard, with a view to further improve its effectiveness and engagement with civil society.
- Consider how UNAMA will engage with civil society moving forwards and whether it will continue to play a facilitating role, taking into account lessons learned. Improved clarity and coordination is needed between and within UN bodies regarding their engagement with civil society to

prevent duplication and to support a strong civil society presence at the UK hosted international conference later this year.

## CONCLUSION

The 2014 UNAMA mandate is an opportunity for the UN Security Council to ensure that critical gains made in the last decade are not lost as international forces withdraw from the country. There are a number of areas where the mandate could be strengthened for this purpose.

The Security Council's leadership is essential at this critical time in Afghanistan's transition – not only to ensure UNAMA has an achievable mandate that prioritises the safety and security of Afghan civilians – but also to ensure the mandate is implemented effectively going forward.

# NOTES

---

- 1 Report of the UN Secretary General, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2013, UN Doc. A/68/645 – S/2013/72, 8[24].
- 2 Report of the UN Secretary General, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 September 2013, UN Doc. A/68/609–S/2013/535, 8[28].
- 3 UNDP Human Development Report 2012, Table 1: Human Development Index and its components. Available from: <https://data.undp.org/dataset/Table-1-Human-Development-Index-and-its-components/wxub-qc5k>
- 4 World Bank and Ministry of Economy, Poverty in Afghanistan, 2010.
- 5 Afghanistan is ranked 7th on the Global Vulnerability and Crisis Assessment Final Index. See [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/strategy/gna\\_2013\\_2014.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/strategy/gna_2013_2014.pdf)
- 6 Oxfam International, Women and the Afghan Police: Why a law enforcement agency that respects and protects females is critical for progress, 10 September 2013, <http://oxf.am/UbZ>
- 7 See e.g. Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, 15 May 2013, UN Doc. A/67/845–S/2013/245, excerpt posted on Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. Available from: <http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/countries/afghanistan/>.
- 8 Report of the UN Secretary General, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2013, UN Doc. A/68/645 – S/2013/72, 8[25].
- 9 See <http://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/unama-strongly-condemns-killing-civilian-workers>
- 10 Report of the UN Secretary General, 6 December 2013, 11[38]. See also International NGO Safety Office <http://www.ngosafety.org/>
- 11 Ibid, 12[40].
- 12 UNODC, Afghanistan Opium Survey, November 2013, p.18
- 13 Report of the UN Secretary General, 6 December 2013, 11[35].
- 14 Statement by Deputy Minister of Refugees and Repatriations at Stakeholder’s Consultation on the National IDP Policy, Kabul 15 May 2013.
- 15 Report of the UN Secretary General, 6 December 2013, 8[24].
- 16 UNAMA, ‘A Way to Go: An Update on Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women in Afghanistan’, December 2013.
- 17 Oxfam International, Women and the Afghan Police, op. cit.
- 18 Security Council Resolution 2096, 15[43]
- 19 UN Special Representative to Afghanistan, Afghanistan’s Millennium Development Goals Report, Vision 2020, p.94 <http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/MDG-2005-vision2020.pdf>
- 20 Report of the UN Secretary General, 6 December 2013, 8[25].
- 21 Ibid, 8[25].
- 22 Report of the UN Secretary General, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 15 May 2013, UN Doc. A/67/845 – S/2013/245.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Security Council Resolution 2096, [32].
- 25 Security Council Resolution 2096, [33].
- 26 Report of the UN Secretary General, 6 December 2013, 5[15].



---

This note was co-written by Steph Cousins and Liz Cameron, with particular thanks to Fadulla Wilmot, May Maloney, Majella Hurney, Julie McKay, Susanne Schmeidl and Justine Piquemal.

The note has been written on behalf of the following organisations: Action Aid, Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR), Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), Act for Peace, Afghan Civil Society Forum (ACSF), Afghan Women's Educational Centre (AWEC), Afghan Women Service and Education (AWSE), Afghan Women Skill Development Centre (AWSDC), Afghan Women's Union (AWU), British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG), Church World Service, Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan (CCA), International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), Peace Training and Research Organisation (PTRO), Islamic Relief Australia, Mahboba's Promise, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Oxfam, Research Institute for Women, Peace and Security (RIWPS), Training Human Rights Association for Afghan Women (THRA), TEAR Australia, Watch on Basic Rights Afghanistan Organization (WBRAO), Women Peace and Security Academic Collective (WPSAC), World Vision Australia.

The note has been adapted from a briefing paper prepared by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Afghanistan Working Group for the Australian Government, as a follow up to the Australian Government's second civil society consultations on the UN Security Council, 12 December 2013.

The note is endorsed by the two key NGO peak bodies for Australia and Afghanistan:



The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)



Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR)

For further information on the issues raised in this paper please contact Steph Cousins, [stephc@oxfam.org.au](mailto:stephc@oxfam.org.au), co-Chair of the ACFID Afghanistan Working Group.