

**MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT JOIN HUNDREDS OF AFGHAN WOMEN AND
ACTIVISTS TO CALL
FOR INCLUSION IN THE AFGHANISTAN PEACE PROCESS**

MEP's join over 30 high-profile figures, including Margaret Atwood, Gloria Steinem, Roger Waters, Arundhati Roy, Ken Loach, and Khaled Hosseini

July 29, 2019 –MEP's have joined a global [campaign](#) led by Time4RealPeace, a coalition of Afghan women and civil society groups, calling for their inclusion in the peace deal being negotiated between the United States and the Taliban, and for the protection of their democratic institutions and the rule of law.

Women's voices and interests, in addition to their elected representatives, have been markedly [absent from current peace talks](#), raising significant concerns amongst Afghans from across the country that fundamental rights will be lost if the Taliban are to regain power. In response to these concerns, Time4RealPeace launched a [campaign](#) calling for their inclusion in shaping the process, to ensure that their concerns and hopes for Afghanistan are a key part of any peace deal that is negotiated.

The campaign's latest supporters which include, **Ana Gomes** (Portugal), **Julie Ward** (UK), **Soraya Post** (Sweden), **Wajid Khan** (UK), **Patricia Lalonde** (France), **Jude Kirton-Darling** (UK), **José Inácio Faria** (Portugal), **Edouard Martin** (France), **Helmut Scholz** (Germany), **Theresa Griffin** (UK) **Giuseppina Picierno** (Italy), are joining the call for inclusive peace process, shaped by Afghan women, young people and civil society.

The EU has made a long-term commitment to creating an environment for peace in Afghanistan, particularly in strengthening democracy, increasing security and prosperity. During a recent trip to Afghanistan Pierre Mayaudon, the Head of European Union's Delegation to Afghanistan said:

'This new year comes with a sense of hope, but unfortunately also of fear. Hope that soon after years of conflict peace will come to Afghanistan, but fear that this peace will come with a compromise on human rights, specially rights of women and of the young population. Let's combat this fear with unity, solidarity and strengthening of democracy starting with good elections in 2019.'

Time4RealPeace urges the EU to continue its support of women's rights and empowerment, prosperity for the country's youth and support as Afghanistan rebuilds continues to strengthen its democracy, its rule of law and security. We call on the EU to build on its history of supporting the formal inclusion of women and civil society in creating peace, as it did in Syria with the Women's Advisory Board and the Civil Society Support Room, in supporting an inclusive peace process Afghanistan.

The MEP's joined over 30 leading public figures from around the world, 700 people, including over 13 Afghan civil society groups and four international NGO's in signing the

statement. Supporters include Margaret Atwood, Gloria Steinem, Roger Waters, Arundhati Roy, Ken Loach, and Khaled Hosseini.

“When the coalition arrived in Afghanistan in 2001, it was on the back of promises made to Afghan women and future generations,” **stated the letter from Time4RealPeace**. “We have been fighting for our rights and representation ever since. We welcome all steps to bring peace to our country, but history has taught us the bloody lesson that you cannot have peace without inclusion. It is time for real peace. It is at this critical moment for the future of our young people, our women and our democracy that we ask for global solidarity, so we can continue to build on our victories.”

The appeal is a part of a wider campaign calling for inclusion of the voices and interests of women, young people, and civil society in the peace negotiations and democratic structures in Afghanistan.

Full text:

Over the last 17 years, we have fought to bring women’s voices and interests into Afghanistan’s political, social and cultural institutions, against a backdrop of ongoing violence. We are civilians, teachers, doctors, activists, students and artists who have collectively and individually created space to advocate both for ourselves and for peace in our country. Many of our leaders have paid with their lives for this progress. We have built on the sacrifices of Malalai Karkar, Hanifa Safi, Najia Sediqi, Safia Amajan, Farkhunda Malikzada, Islam Bibi and we stand on the shoulders of all the other women who have given their lives in the struggle for the same progress. We, the women of Afghanistan will not go backwards.

The gains made from these hard-won battles are now being threatened by a deal that excludes our interests and voices and ignores the representation we have fought for. It is at this critical moment for the future of our young people, our women and our democracy that we ask for global solidarity, so we can continue to build on our victories.

We write this letter in order to voice our concerns about the current peace deal being negotiated between the United States government and the Afghan Taliban. These negotiations do not include the voices of Afghan women, they do not include the voices of our country’s youth, they do not include the voices of civil society nor the democratic structures, government and institutions.

When the coalition arrived in Afghanistan in 2001, it was on the back of promises made to Afghan women and future generations. We have been fighting for our rights and representation ever since. We welcome all steps to bring peace to our country, but history has taught us the bloody lesson that you cannot have peace without inclusion.

As we prepare to defend our rights once more, we ask that this peace process reaffirms and protects our constitutional rights, interests and democracy.

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