



# **Reclaiming Peace: Afghan Women's Perspectives on Security, Justice, and Inclusion**

Palwasha Hassan

**MINA'S LIST™**

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“Only through the participation of all ethnic, religious, and political groups can lasting peace be achieved.”

Mina's List (October 2025) on the occasion of 25th Anniversary of UNCR 1325  
Reclaiming Peace: Afghan Women's Perspectives on Security, Justice, and Inclusion

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# Executive Summary

Twenty-five years after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Afghan women remain at the forefront of the struggle for peace, rights, and representation. Despite two decades of historic progress in education, leadership, and equality, the Taliban's return to power in August 2021 has led to the systematic dismantling of women's freedoms and near-total exclusion from public life—conditions increasingly recognized as a form of gender apartheid.

Despite this reality, there are some narratives that suggest Afghanistan is more “peaceful” under Taliban rule. In response, Mina's List conducted a landmark survey of 492 Afghan women—77% living inside Afghanistan and 23% in the diaspora—to ensure their voices directly inform international policy. The findings reveal widespread insecurity, repression, and exclusion. Yet, Afghan women continue to demonstrate remarkable agency, resilience, and a clear vision for an inclusive and just future.

## Key Insights

### **Peace without rights is not peace.**

A total of 78% of women surveyed rejected the notion that Afghanistan is peaceful. For them, peace is the presence of their rights, such as freedom of movement, access to education, and participation in public life—not merely the absence of war.

### **Education, work, and mobility are non-negotiable.**

Education was identified as the top priority by 90% of women, followed by economic opportunity (88%) and freedom of movement (78%). These are seen as essential to both personal security and national recovery.

### **Inclusion is the cornerstone of stability.**

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents emphasized that lasting peace is impossible without women's full participation in decision-making and peace processes. They highlighted dialogue, healing, and reconciliation as key pathways to achieving peace.

### **The Doha Process lacks transparency and representation**

Only 35% of women inside Afghanistan are aware of the UN-led Doha Process, highlighting deep gaps in communication and inclusion. Respondents call for genuine participation of women and civil society—not tokenism.

### **Economic exclusion deepens the crisis.**

Employment bans have erased decades of progress and cost the Afghan economy an estimated \$1–1.4 billion annually. Women describe economic participation not as a privilege, but as a lifeline for survival and national recovery.

### **Counter-narcotics efforts must protect livelihoods.**

The Taliban's opium ban has devastated rural economies, disproportionately impacting women. Women call for gender-responsive livelihood support, including health services and community-resilience programs.

## Afghan Women's Call to Action

Afghan women urge the United Nations, donor governments, and international partners to:

- **Adopt a rights-based approach** to engagement with Afghanistan, ensuring that all diplomatic and development efforts uphold international human rights norms and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.
- **Guarantee women's inclusion** in all formal and informal peace processes, including the Doha Process and any future dialogue mechanisms.
- **Reinstate access to education and employment** for women and girls which should be seen as non-negotiable prerequisites for peace and sustainable development.
- **Enhance transparency and consultation** in all international initiatives on Afghanistan, ensuring that Afghan women's perspectives inform decision-making at every stage.
- **Invest in women's economic participation and mental health**, recognizing their central role in community resilience, recovery, and stability.
- **Strengthen support for Afghan women's organizations**—both inside the country and in the diaspora—as key partners for service delivery, advocacy, and accountability.
- **Sustain global attention and solidarity**, particularly as Afghanistan risks disappearing from the international agenda despite the ongoing repression of half its population.

## Conclusion

Afghan women's message is clear:

Peace without women is neither just nor sustainable.

Their perspectives reflect not only their lived experience but a deep, informed understanding of the structural and political challenges facing the country. Afghanistan is facing. Afghan women want real peace grounded in rights, justice, and inclusion. Achieving sustainable stability requires listening to, including, and empowering Afghan women—not as passive beneficiaries, but as key actors in shaping their country's future.



# Introduction

October 2025 marks the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, a landmark global policy that established the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda. The resolution recognized both the disproportionate impact of violent conflict on women and girls and the vital contributions women make to building and sustaining peace. Yet a quarter-century later, women continue to be largely excluded from peace process and decision-making spaces around the world. Conflict is on the rise, and women's rights are being rolled back. Despite decades of advocacy and global commitments to the principles of UNSCR1325, the international community is witnessing the erosion of hard-won gains toward gender equality and inclusive peace.

Afghanistan illustrates this crisis most starkly. Over two decades (2002-2021), Afghan women achieved historic gains in political leadership, education, economic empowerment, protection mechanisms, and access to justice. Yet, after being excluded from the U.S.-led negotiations with the Taliban in 2019 and sidelined during the Intra-Afghan peace process of 2020-2021, these hard-won advances were rapidly dismantled after the Taliban returned to power in August 2025. Today, Afghan women face profound marginalization, systematic discrimination and near-total erasure from public life.

In response to the systematic rollback of their rights since August 2021, Afghan women have mobilised to resist repression and defend their fundamental freedoms.

Within Afghanistan, women continue to protest, organize, and document abuses, often at great personal risk. Across the diaspora, activists and networks have amplified these efforts, ensuring that Afghan women's perspectives remain visible in global policy discussions. Many of these movements are grounded in the principle of accountability: women have pursued justice through international legal and diplomatic mechanisms, including calls for recognition of gender apartheid and for the referral of Taliban actions to the International Criminal Court. Together, these efforts demonstrate that Afghan women are not passive victims but active agents of change.

Yet, despite the evolving realities for women and the mobilization in response, a contrasting narrative persists in some policy circles—one that suggests Afghanistan is now safer, more stable, or even “peaceful” under Taliban rule. This perception, however, stands in sharp contrast to the lived experiences of Afghan women, whose daily lives have been defined by profound insecurity, systematic discrimination, and a relentless erosion of their human rights since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021.

To contextualize this narrative and re-center Afghan women's perspectives, Mina's List conducted a survey of nearly 500 Afghan women—77% residing inside Afghanistan and 23% across the diaspora. For detailed information on the research methodology, please refer to the annex.

Designed to address critical gaps in existing research and reporting, the study provides the most current insights into women's experiences, priorities, perspectives and recommendations for their country's future. This survey asked women how they define and experience peace, security, and safety; what pathways they envision for restoring their rights; and how they want to engage in shaping Afghanistan's future. Their voices also illuminate urgent issues currently debated in international forums such as the Doha Process—from economic development to counternarcotics efforts—and offer clear, actionable guidance for the way forward.

By amplifying these lived experiences and perspectives to policymakers and global leaders, Mina's List seeks to ensure that Afghan women are not spoken for, but are heard from directly in or to shape both national and global peace and security agendas.

This brief summarizes the survey's key findings and draws on insights from ongoing engagement with Afghan women—both inside the country and in the diaspora. They have spoken clearly:

- Peace and security are not just as the absence of armed conflict, but the presence of freedom, education, work, and participation in public life for all, especially women and girls.
- not be achieved without lifting the bans on education and employment, ensuring freedom of movement, and involving women meaningfully in peace and decision-making processes.
- Current and future peace processes must be action-oriented and based on inclusion, transparency, trust, and the lived realities of those most affected by the conflict.



# Key Findings: Afghan Women's lived Reality

## Peace for Whom? Afghan Women's Perspectives on Safety and Security

Mina's List's survey results, reinforced by regular engagement with Afghan women inside Afghanistan and in neighboring countries, expose a sharp contrast between women's lived experiences and claims that Afghanistan has become safer and more peaceful under Taliban rule. [i]

Afghan women were first asked how safe they currently feel on a scale from -10 (most unsafe) to +10 (most safe), with zero representing neutral. The overall average safety rating was -3, reflecting a prevailing sense of insecurity among Afghan women. Women currently inside Afghanistan rated their safety slightly higher (-2), while those outside the country rated it considerably lower (-6). This difference suggests that women living within Afghanistan may have adapted to or normalized prevailing conditions of insecurity, whereas those observing from outside may perceive the situation as more perilous or deteriorating.

We then asked Afghan women to compare their feelings of safety and protection over the last year compared to previous years, using the same scale (-10 indicating less safe/protected and +10 more safe/protected). The average response was again -3. This suggests that Afghan women's overall sense of safety is not only low but continues to decline.

Importantly, a large majority (78%) of Afghan women rejected the notion that Afghanistan has become more peaceful under Taliban rule. Their responses challenge official and international narratives that equate the

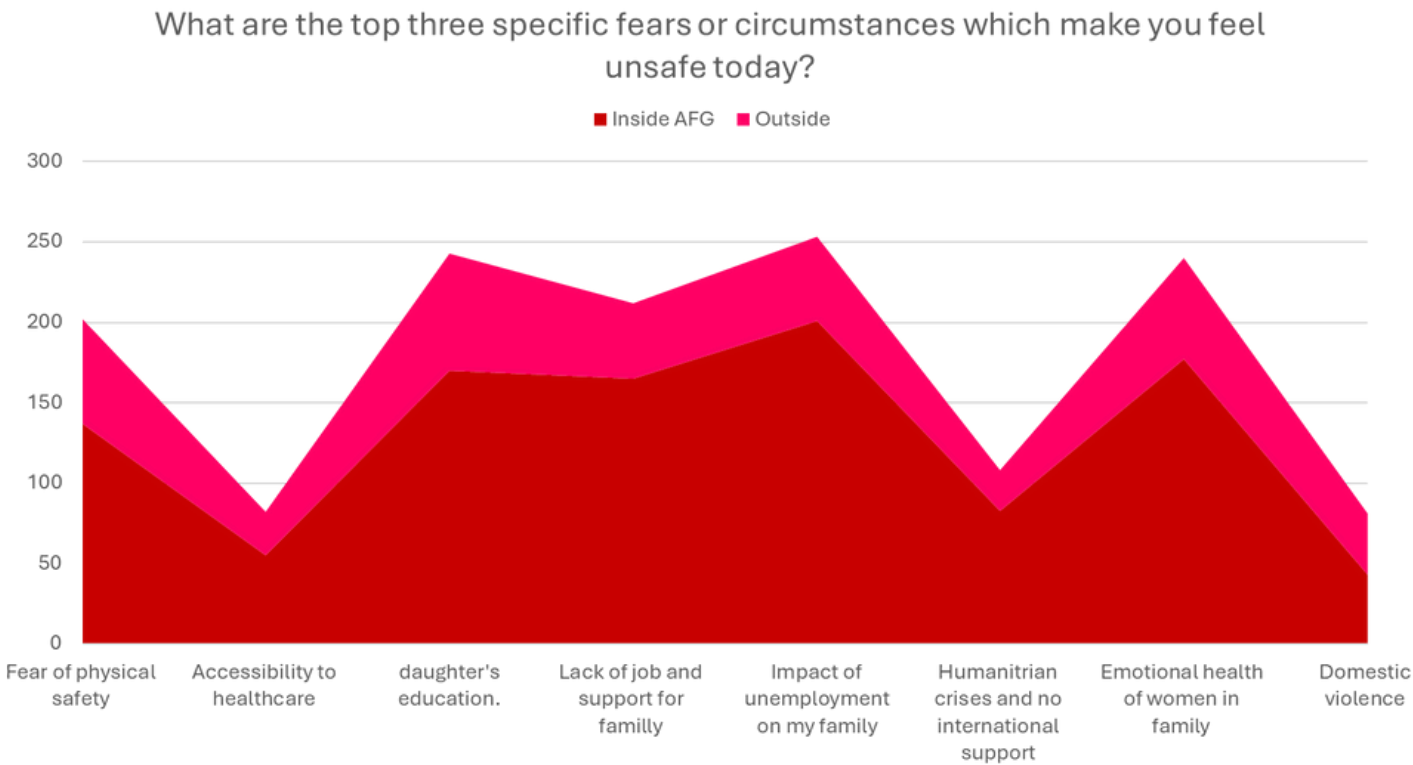
absence of armed conflict with peace and security. Reflecting what peace scholar Johan Galtung describes as the distinction between negative peace—the mere absence of direct violence—and positive peace, which entails justice, equality, and human security.

Instead, Afghan women defined peace and security holistically—as encompassing freedom of movement, access to education, employment, and healthcare, as well as psychological well-being, dignity, and participation in public life. For many women the prevailing “calm” in Afghanistan was experienced as an “enforced silence and repression” rather than as genuine peace. As one respondent explained, “Much of the violence is not public, and people cannot speak about or publish the day-to-day violence happening against the people of Afghanistan, especially women and girls.” Another added: the Taliban authorities themselves “are a serious danger to positive peace for women.” These responses underscore that the normalization of oppression has rendered much of the violence women experience invisible—yet no less real or harmful.

Taken together, these findings underscore a central truth: for Afghan women, peace cannot be separated from human rights, justice, and equality. It cannot be achieved without the restoration of their freedoms and their full participation in society and in any future peace process. As articulated in UNSCR 1325, sustainable peace depends on women's equal participation and the protection of their rights. Centering-



Afghan women’s lived realities in defining what peace and security mean is therefore not only a moral imperative but also a practical necessity—without it, the future of Afghanistan remains in peril.



**Afghan Women’s Vision for a Just and Inclusive Peace**

When asked about what is needed to achieve peace going forward, Afghan women painted a clear and powerful picture of their priorities. Two-thirds of respondents (66%, averaged across respondents both inside and outside of the country) identified women’s rights and participation as essential—the most frequently mentioned factor--emphasizing that peace is impossible without women’s full inclusion. This includes freedom of movement, equal participation in society and politics, and meaningful engagement in peace processes. Education emerged as the second most cited priority (32%, averaged across respondents both inside and outside of the country), recognized not only as a fundamental right but also as a prerequisite for sustainable peace and social stability. Afghan women also highlighted the need for inclusive,

pluralistic governance that reflects Afghanistan’s ethnic, linguistic, and regional diversity. They stressed that any future political settlement must create inclusive representative structures to ensure both legitimacy and long-term stability. As one woman stated, “Only through the participation of all ethnic, religious, and political groups can lasting peace be achieved.”

Collectively, these perspectives articulate a transformative vision of peace—one that is inclusive not only of women but all communities in Afghanistan. It is a vision grounded in justice, dignity, and equity, rejecting exclusion and calling for the equal sharing of power and resources across society.

## Afghan Women's Calls for a Rights-Based Peace and Inclusive Engagement

Afghan women's priorities and visions for a better future are not abstract ideals. Their priorities—education, economic opportunity, and freedom of movement—form a coherent and urgent agenda for international action.

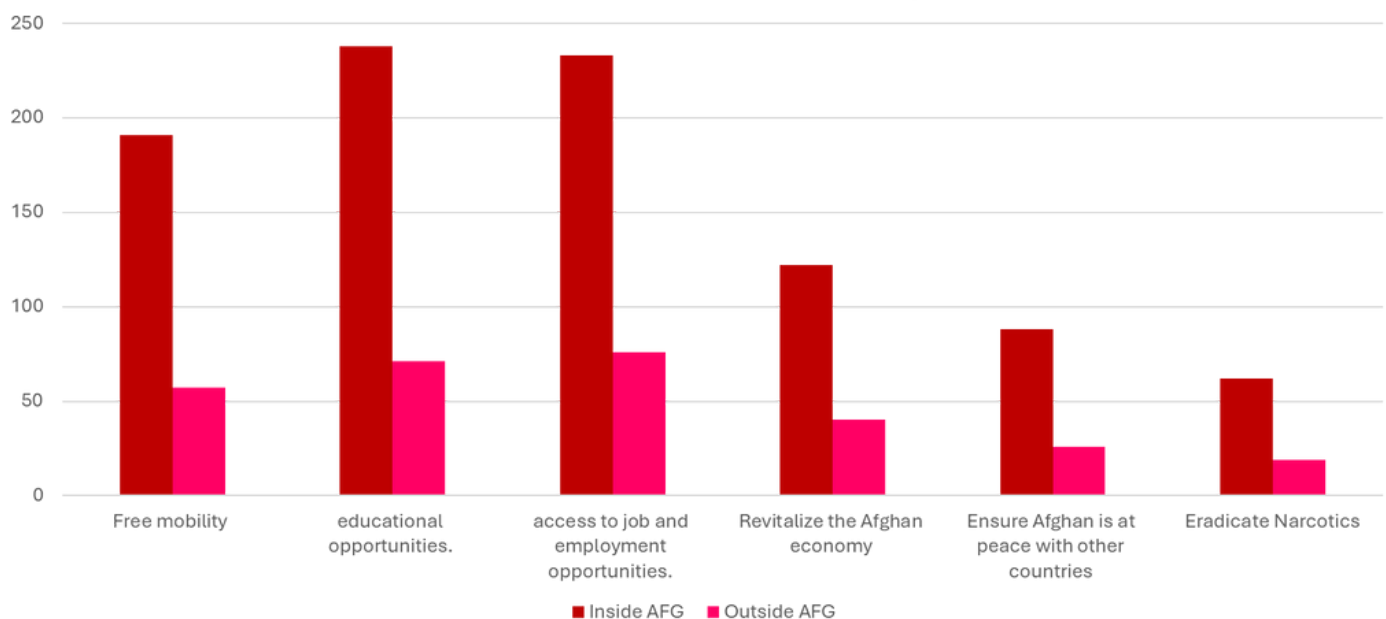
Survey findings revealed consistent concerns among Afghan women both inside and outside the country. When asked what top concerns must be addressed by the de facto authorities and the international community, an overwhelming 90% of respondents (238 inside Afghanistan and 71 outside) identified access to education for women and girls as their top concern, highlighting the devastating effects of ongoing bans on secondary and higher education.

requirement for a male guardian (mahram)—that severely limit women's access to work, healthcare, and education.

Together, these findings reflect a unified and urgent call for the restoration of Afghan women's basic rights and freedoms. These must be central to all international engagement and defined as core outcomes of future policy and diplomacy.

At the heart of this call is a consistent message to the international community: adopt a rights-based approach to peace and engagement—one that does not trade freedoms for so-called stability. Afghan women insist that human rights, especially women's rights,

What are the top 3 issues you would like the de facto authorities and international community to focus on in Afghanistan?



Eighty-eight percent (238 inside and 88 outside) emphasized the need for access to economic opportunities, citing widespread unemployment and the systematic exclusion of women from public life, which have exacerbated poverty and dependency. Additionally, 78% (191 inside and 57 outside) prioritized freedom of movement, pointing to restrictive mobility policies—including the

must be non-negotiable in all diplomatic and political processes involving Afghanistan. Respondents also view dialogue as essential to achieving peace but urge that processes like the Doha talks expand beyond negotiations with the Taliban to include broader Afghan representation—especially women—as meaningful participants in shaping both the process and its outcomes.

## Afghan Women's Perspectives on the Doha Process: Inclusion, Transparency, and Accountability

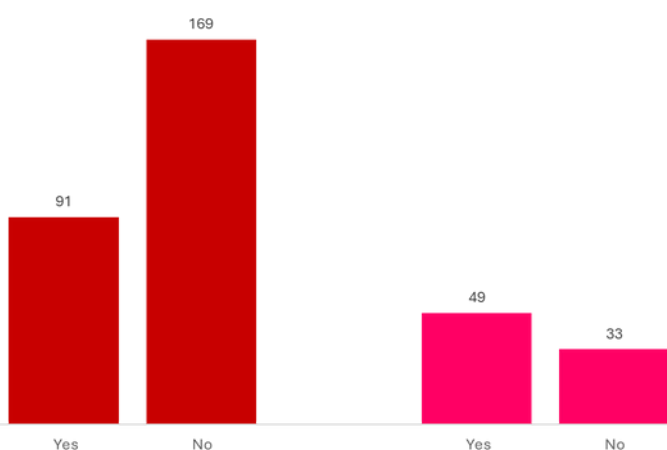
Building just and lasting peace in Afghanistan will require an organized and systematic process to guide progress toward that goal. One such initiative is the United Nations-backed Doha Process, launched in May 2023 and hosted by Qatar, which aims to develop a unified international strategy for engaging with the Taliban.[i] Since its inception, there have been three convenings attended by Special Envoys to Afghanistan from 25 UN member states and other key stakeholders, including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The UN has emphasized that these dialogues are not about recognizing or legitimizing the Taliban regime, but about creating a coordinated framework for engagement that prioritizes human rights—particularly the rights of women and girls—and addresses critical issues like counter-narcotics and economic inclusion. Despite these aims, Afghan women surveyed expressed strong expectations that the United Nations, as lead convener, must uphold its stated commitments to gender equality and human rights.

The Doha process has, however, faced significant criticism from women's rights activists and human rights groups for its lack of transparency and inclusivity. Little is publicly known about its internal structure, objectives, process, or progress beyond two main working tracks: one on the economy and private sector, and the other on counter-narcotics. Civil society actors and women's organizations have repeatedly highlighted the limited—or complete lack of—participation by human rights advocates and non-Taliban representatives.[i] Observers argue that women's involvement in these working groups has so far been largely tokenistic, reflecting broader patterns of exclusion from political and economic life under Taliban rule. [ii]

Given the importance of this process, Mina's List sought to understand how Afghan women perceive and engage with it. Survey results reveal a sharp disparity in awareness: only 35% of women inside Afghanistan were informed about the Doha Process, compared with 60% of those living abroad in the diaspora. This gap appears to reflect both constrained access to information for women within Afghanistan and insufficient efforts by organizers to engage them meaningfully—mirroring broader patterns of exclusion that have characterized international dialogue on Afghanistan. Despite these barriers, Afghan women who are familiar with the process expressed strong and consistent views on how it should improve—calling for greater inclusion, transparency, and genuine representation. Afghan women stressed that the Doha Process should not be a political dialogue confined to the Taliban and international actors, but rather a platform that amplifies the voices of diverse Afghan constituencies—especially women, civil society actors, and marginalized groups. Lest we repeat the mistakes of past peace processes in Afghanistan, respondents warned, exclusion today risks undermining any future path toward a just and lasting peace.

Are you following the 'Doha Process' that is being led by the United Nations?

■ Inside Afg ■ Outside Afg





Many women also emphasized the need for the process to be more action-oriented and grounded in lived realities of Afghans. As one respondent bluntly stated, “So far, [the process] is without any result. If it had a result, Afghanistan would not be in this situation.” This sentiment reflects a widespread and growing sense of frustration among Afghan women that the Doha Process remains disconnected from the realities on the ground. For example, Afghan women frequently cited education as a central issue for any credible peace effort, viewing its exclusion from Doha as an example of misplaced priorities. For many, the Doha Process represents a missed opportunity—yet another example of international negotiations conducted without the meaningful participation of those most directly affected by conflict and repression.

Yet, even amidst this frustration, Afghan women continue to engage constructively. When asked about the two main topics of the Doha Process – the economy and counternarcotics – clear themes emerged from the survey data, offering insights into how future dialogues could better reflect Afghan women’s realities and aspirations.

### **Economic Participation: A Lifeline, Not a Privilege**

Afghan women have a long history of contributions to the economy of Afghanistan, as well as the delivery of public services across the country. As early as the 1940s and 1950s, women were employed as nurses, doctors, and teachers.[i] Between 2001 to 2020, women’s public participation steadily expanded, with women making up 27% of the civil service.[ii]

Since the Taliban’s return to power in August 2021, however, this progress has been systematically reversed.

Among the Taliban’s 150-plus known edicts, many directly target women’s economic rights and freedom of employment.[i]

Women are now largely barred from most sectors, with only narrow exceptions in health and primary education. However, this space is also beginning to narrow. Even in healthcare, where women once held strong representation, training institutions for female professionals have been closed. [ii]

Banning women from employment is eroding their ability to contribute to their families, communities, and the national economy. United Nations estimates put the economic loss at around \$1 billion per year—approximately 5% of Afghanistan’s GDP. Other sources, including the World Bank, suggest that the combined impact of restrictions on both education and employment for women could be even higher, reaching up to \$1.4 billion annually.[iii]

Women have also been indispensable to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, acting as frontline workers and trusted interlocutors. Yet under current restrictions, many are now banned from working with NGOs, including UN agencies—undermining both their livelihoods and the effectiveness of aid delivery. The earthquakes of September 2025 further exposed these barriers, as women and girls faced heightened obstacles to accessing assistance due to movement restrictions.

There is some limited tolerance for women’s involvement in restricted, home-based businesses such as tailoring, sewing, embroidery, and kitchen gardening and with few exception, the Women’s Chamber of Commerce has also been allowed to reestablish. But overall, women’s employment remains tightly controlled. Public-facing professions like beauty parlors have been shut down, with some punished for operating. [i]

Despite these constraints, Afghan women view economic participation not as a privilege, but as a lifeline for survival.

More than half of the respondents (232 women inside Afghanistan and 76 outside) reported that—even under current restrictions—their limited economic activities help support their families. However, these efforts remain fragile and unsustainable without expanded opportunities, access to markets, and freedom of movement.

**Education** was consistently identified as a foundation for any long-term economic recovery. Over 90% of Afghan women respondents (199 residing inside the country and 71 outside the country) cited lifting the ban on women's education as the single most urgent action needed to enable women's meaningful participation in the economy. Respondents across different regions consistently called for investment in education, vocational training, access to capital, and market linkages to rebuild livelihoods.

Despite repression, Afghan women's NGOs remain active and resilient, those inside the country continuing to provide essential services under extraordinary constraints and those who are residing abroad are vocally advocating for women's rights. These organizations must be supported—not only as vital spaces for women's agency and community resilience, but also as platforms for income generation and economic recovery.[ii]

## **Counter-Narcotics: Between Eradication and Survival**

The Taliban's anti-narcotics campaign has led to a 95% reduction in opium poppy production since 2021,[i] drastically reshaping Afghanistan's rural economy. While this has disrupted the drug trade, it has also triggered a severe economic shock

—particularly in rural, agrarian regions where millions depended on poppy cultivation for their livelihoods.[ii] Among those most affected are rural women, who traditionally played a key role in the labor-intensive poppy harvest.

Thus, already restricted from most other employment, the opium ban has further deepened women's poverty and marginalization.

Many also highlighted the mental-health toll of economic deprivation in addition to the Taliban's repressive restrictions against women, with many describing it as being left with few viable paths forward. As one woman put it, "There is no suitable opportunity; all women are under psychological pressure within the walls of the home." Her words capture both the human cost of economic exclusion and the urgent need for inclusive development strategies that address women's realities, not just national policy goals. Several respondents noted that addiction among women is rising—often as a coping mechanism under conditions of isolation and trauma. They urged investment in gender-sensitive harm-reduction and treatment services, which remain scarce and inaccessible to most women.

Afghan women expressed differing views on the Taliban's eradication policy: some acknowledged the public-health rationale, but most emphasized that eradication without livelihood alternatives only entrenches suffering. Rather than punitive enforcements, women called for community-based approaches that prioritize alternative livelihoods, community well-being, economic resilience, and long-term recovery.

In areas where opium poppy production is being replaced by alternative livelihoods, respondents stressed the need for gender-responsive designs that recognize women's informal but essential roles in household production. They recommended support for basic cash staples such as wheat, beans, and rice, as well as higher-value crops like saffron and fruit trees. Others suggested diversifying beyond agriculture—into livestock rearing, food processing, and small-scale enterprises—provided that opportunities are legally accessible and safe for women to engage in.

## Conclusion: A Vision for a Just and Lasting Peace

Mina's List began this project with a clear purpose: to ask Afghan women directly for their perspectives and definitions of peace and security, and to elevate those perspectives to global policymakers. Afghan women categorically reject the narrative that Afghanistan is safer and more peaceful under Taliban rule. They articulate peace and security not as the absence of conflict, but the presence of freedom, education, work, and participation in public life for all, especially women and girls. Their vision of peace is transformative—rooted in justice, equity, inclusion, and most importantly, human rights.

Across the regions of Afghanistan and diaspora, women surveyed and consulted shared a clear and consistent message: for peace to be achieved, the Taliban's repressive policies must be reversed and women's full rights restored. This means lifting the bans on education and employment, ensuring freedom of movement, and involving women meaningfully in peace and related processes.

Despite widespread exclusion and repression, Afghan women continue to engage, organize, and voice their priorities, aspirations and expectations of international actors. Their call is not for symbolic recognition—but for an equal seat at the table, protection of their rights, and meaningful inclusion in the future of their country.

Considering the Taliban's rigid stance and the waning attention of the international community, there are obvious challenges ahead.[i]

Yet, Afghan women stress that sustainable peace depends on a process that builds trust—not only with the ruling authorities, but also with the women of Afghanistan. Healing, dialogue, and reconciliation are essential components of that process.

On the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Afghan women call on the international community to take Afghanistan's stability and peace seriously. This requires listening to, including, and empowering Afghan women—not as passive beneficiaries, but as key actors in shaping their country's future.

Afghan women remind the world, peace without women is neither just nor lasting. Their courage and clarity offer not only a moral compass but also a practical roadmap for a more inclusive and sustainable peace in Afghanistan.



**To realize this vision, Afghan women urge donors, multilateral actors, and the United Nations to:**

**1. Elevate Afghan Women's Vision of Peace**

- Recognize Afghan women's vision of peace—one rooted in justice, inclusion, human rights, and access to education and work.
- Promote a holistic understanding of security that includes education, health care, mobility, and economic rights for all.

**2. Reflect Afghanistan's Full Diversity in Dialogue and Peace Processes**

- Ensure genuinely inclusive peacebuilding that enables meaningful participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups from all ethnic and geographic communities.
- Support intra-Afghan dialogues that promote equitable governance and fair resource distribution.

**3. Establish Formal Mechanisms for Women's Participation**

- Create rotating advisory groups of Afghan women and civil society representatives to guide policy and engagement processes.
- Ensure women's direct involvement in Doha working groups and other international forums, supported by technical expertise.
- Conduct regular consultations with women inside Afghanistan and in the diaspora, integrating their insights into all dialogue, peace and policy platforms.
- Publish transparent reports demonstrating how women's perspectives are reflected in peace dialogues to rebuild trust.

**4. Link Dialogue to Tangible Outcomes**

- Embed clear, measurable benchmarks in negotiations with de facto authorities, including:
  - Lifting bans on girls' education and women's employment
  - Ensuring freedom of movement
  - Safeguarding women's rights and public participation

**5. Make Women's Rights a Non-Negotiable Condition**

- Condition international and UN engagement with the de facto authorities on measurable progress, including:
  - Full access to education
  - Economic and public participation
  - Freedom of movement

**6. Support Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Participation**

- Provide direct support for women's livelihoods through:
  - Vocational training and digital skills development
  - Expanded access to microfinance, markets and business networks.
- Ensure legal and social protections for women-led enterprises.
- Safeguard women's groups and NGOs, enabling their nationwide operations and outreach

**7. Apply a Gender Lens to Opium Eradication and Livelihood Programs**

- Design alternative livelihood efforts with gender-responsive strategies.
- Invest in harm reduction and health services for women, especially those in rural and marginalized communities.

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# Annex - Methodology

The research began with a desk review of existing statements, advocacy papers, and publications produced by Afghan civil society, United Nations entities, and international organizations. This phase helped identify key themes and data gaps, including the limited availability of recent data and the frequent exclusion or generalization of Afghan women's voices in previous reporting.

The primary research involved data collection through an online survey. Ensuring respondent safety and accessibility was a top priority. Given the high-risk environment for women under Taliban rule, no personally identifiable information—such as names or addresses—was collected. To address barriers like limited electricity and internet access, the survey was conducted using a user-friendly online platform previously utilized by Mina's List. Questions were provided in local languages to ensure ease of participation.

The survey included 27 questions: 17 closed-ended questions (updating or verifying existing data) and 10 open-ended questions designed to capture deeper qualitative insights. Different versions were used for women inside Afghanistan and those living abroad. On average, participants took 32 minutes to complete the survey, although some required several hours or days due to inconsistent access to electricity or the internet. Despite these challenges, the quality of responses—especially to open-ended questions—was high, with clear patterns emerging across regions and demographics.

The survey was distributed through Mina's List's established networks of women human rights defenders, civil society leaders, political activists, and community groups both inside and outside Afghanistan.

A total of 492 valid responses were received—377 from women inside Afghanistan and 115 from those living abroad—far exceeding the original target of 100, and reflecting strong engagement across different contexts. Respondents represented 32 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces and 12 ethnic groups, including Pashtun (101), Hazara (61), Tajik (229), as well as Sadat, Qizilbash, Imaq, Turkmen, Uzbek, Arab, Baluch, Mughal, and Sheghnani—highlighting the country's ethnic and cultural diversity. The majority of respondents were educated women from urban areas—73% urban, 23% semi-urban, and only 4% from rural regions—reflecting both the reach of Mina's List's networks and the limitations in digital and physical access to these areas.

Respondents ranged in age from 18 to over 56:

110 were aged 18–25

178 were 26–35

84 were 36–45

66 were 46–55

25 were 56 and above