



GENEVA CONFERENCE ON AFGHANISTAN

27 – 28 November 2018

Side Meeting Concept Note

Human Rights

Protecting Children to Safeguard Afghanistan's Future

27 November 2018, 11:00 – 12:30
Palais des Nations, Building C, Room I

BACKGROUND

The armed conflict in Afghanistan continues to take a heavy toll on the Afghan population, particularly children, who comprised one-third of all civilian casualties last year. Attacks against schools and clinics have impeded their access to education and healthcare; children continue to be used by parties to the conflict; and sexual violence against children, particularly *bacha bazi*, remains a serious concern. Inadequate protection of the next generation of Afghans will impede progress towards broader development objectives relating to health, education, economic growth, and ultimately peace. In order to safeguard the future of Afghanistan, the protection of children must be prioritized.

OBJECTIVES

The meeting will focus on the conflict in Afghanistan and its impact on children, drawing relevant examples in the areas of education and healthcare, child recruitment and use, sexual violence and explosive remnants of war as well as pressure-plate improved explosive devices. The speakers will highlight successes and challenges faced in addressing these areas of conflict-related harm, including actions taken by the Afghan Government, and explore ways in which these efforts can be bolstered moving forward, including with the support of the international community. The purpose of the side meeting is to demonstrate that protecting children from conflict-related harm, particularly in these key areas, will contribute to broader development goals as a necessary component of securing lasting peace.

FORMAT

The meeting will be chaired by Mariam Safi, Executive Director of the Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies, which is an Afghan research organization conducting policy-relevant research aimed to shape the governance agenda in Afghanistan. Ms. Safi will open the meeting and set the context for the discussion on protection of civilians issues, with the focus on child protection. This will be followed by a screening of two short films from the Herat and Mazar human rights film competitions, which were made by Afghans to show the impact of the conflict on their everyday lives. This will be followed by short presentations from the panelists, each focusing on a different thematic area, highlighting successes and challenges faced in protecting children from the impact of the armed conflict. A moderated question and answer period will further explore these topics and consider ways in which efforts by the Afghan government can be bolstered, including by the international community. Ms. Safi will conclude the meeting by drawing links between the presentations and discussions and the broader development agenda.

PROPOSED AGENDA

Time	Agenda	Speaker
11:00	Welcome and Introduction	Mariam Safi, Executive Director, Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DROPS)
11:10	Screening of two short films from the Herat and Mazar human rights film competitions	
11:20	Panel discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sima Simar, Director, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission• Cornelius Williams, UNICEF Associate Director and Global Chief of Child Protection• Mohammad Shafiq Yosufi, Director, Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (Afghanistan)• Danielle Bell, Chief, UNAMI Human Rights Service (HRS), Former Chief UNAMA HRS	
11:50	Moderated Q&A	All
12:20	Concluding remarks	Mariam Safi, Executive Director, Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DROPS)