



Statement by Horia Mosadiq of the Afghanistan Transitional Justice Coordination Group.

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Ladies and Gentlemen, I am speaking to you today as a representative of the Transitional Justice Coordination Group of Afghanistan.

Four decades of conflict, characterized by blatant violations of international humanitarian law, have left millions of civilians as victims. In the last ten years alone, more than 70,000 Afghans have been killed or injured, according to UN figures.

Individuals like Habib Wali, whose story you can read in the exhibition of “Memory Boxes” in this building, who lost his mother and two sisters in a massive truck bomb attack in Kabul, which killed 15 and injured 283. Habib says nothing has ever been done to investigate the massacre.

One of the reasons why we, the Afghans, have remained trapped in an unbroken cycle of 40-year long conflict, is a profoundly rooted culture of impunity. In my country, almost all conflict actors operate in total disregard of local and international norms and they continue to firmly believe that nobody will ever hold them accountable.

When in late 2017 and early this year, the victims were provided with an opportunity to make representations to the court about how to deal with the crimes that have taken place in Afghanistan since 2003, they came up with a clear, unified and strong message, calling upon the Court to launch its investigation immediately.

But without civil society, their views would not have been heard. The court did almost no outreach.

When the long overdue authorization comes, the court must dramatically increase its outreach, including a presence on the ground in Afghanistan. It must work closely with Afghan civil society, victims’ groups and the media.

Outreach to the Afghans, which is immediately and desperately needed because of low levels of awareness, is essential to the credibility of the court.

To the States parties' representatives: Afghans expect consistency – yesterday many of you made strong statements in support of justice being essential for a sustainable peace. We need similar strong statements in favor of the court's investigation in Afghanistan.

This is particularly true under the shadow of US threats to the court. In addition, recent developments have alarmed many Afghans that justice may be sacrificed, with the Afghan government talking of unconditional peace offers, and the US pushing for a quick deal according to its own timeline.

Afghans want peace. But we have the experience of past deals that excluded justice, and led to more violence. We cannot afford for that to happen again. Only with victims' inclusion and participation can we hope to have a sustainable peace.

Therefore, we call on all state parties to be consistent in their support of the court when it intervenes, including in Afghanistan.

Millions of Afghans feel betrayed by their government. We are relying on the ICC and state parties to demonstrate that justice is not just a beautiful word.

We cannot secure the future without addressing the past.