

Goussou Jahangiri ASP Statement, FIDH

3 minutes (approx. 354 words)

Excellencies,

It is my pleasure to address you as the Vice President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) 192 NGOs from 117 countries, including OPEN ASIA - Armanshahr, working in Afghanistan.

I am a feminist, and over the past 29 years have been working for Afghanistan, where permanent war takes a massive toll on its population. We have conducted work related to the ICC mandate reaching out to victims, in particular women, often at great risk. Last year, a colleague was killed one day after a meeting in our office. This August of withdrawal of the US troops, we had to evacuate staff, many of them still in the country at great risk. We have lost the capacity of people working to strengthen accountability for international crimes. We had to destroy all documents. We have lost the work of a lifetime. During this, the ICC has remained largely, absent.

We welcome the OTP's opening of the investigation in Afghanistan, but we are concerned that the Prosecutor narrowed the investigation excluding some alleged perpetrators. In the words of the Pre-Trial Chamber : "...a proper investigation should focus first on crimes, and then on identifying who the responsible persons of those crimes are."

Accountability for international crimes in Afghanistan is a missing link. There has been a failure to properly gather, preserve crucial evidence to bring perpetrators to account. We can no longer just watch from the side-lines. We call on States Parties to effectively cooperate with the Court and press for solutions to protect critical information before it's too late.

FIDH is also concerned about the Court's limited financial resources for proper investigations and prosecutions, for outreach to survivors, victims and affected communities, and to conduct adequate localised, public information about matters that affect their rights.

In situations like Afghanistan, where the risks for human rights defenders are high, a dialogue between all stakeholders is crucial. I encourage the ASP to press for the implementation of recommendations by the Independent Expert Review. We need a dialogue beyond mere formalities, genuine consultations that take into account the realities of situation countries. Victims deserve justice.

Goussou Jahangiri
FIDH Vice President
Director of OPEN ASIA/Armanshahr