



Afghanistan Organization for Development of Human Rights (AODHR)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I come from a war-torn country: Afghanistan, which catastrophically fell to the Taliban extremist group on August 15, 2022. The fall of Kabul to the Taliban also sent shockwaves through to the international community as it was the end of the US and international forces two-decade presence.

After the Taliban came to power the people of Afghanistan experienced disastrous conditions. At least half or more of the Afghan society's population are women who are housebound, secondary schools for girls are closed, extrajudicial killings continue, human rights are violated, and there is no freedom of expression. Simply put, the people of Afghanistan are deprived of basic rights.

Recently, there have been widespread protests worldwide to prevent the genocide of the Hazara people in Afghanistan. Whereby, people have protested in front of ICC whilst trending #Stop Hazara Genocide. This act has reached millions across the globe resulting in people taking it to the streets, rightfully chanting: #Stop Hazara Genocide.

The return to power of the Taliban has included brutal acts and violence against the Hazara throughout Afghanistan. Hazaras are considered to be the most discriminated minority group in Afghanistan and have been subjected to persecution for decades. The group has suffered social and economic marginalisation and waves of physical attacks. Undesirably, we are a long-suffering community, repeatedly repressed and attacked throughout the last four decades, and specifically in the last six years, Hazaras have been targeted in every aspect of life. For such reasons, your support and urgent attention to this matter would be appreciated.

The first half of 2022 has seen hundreds of Hazara people killed and many more injured as a result of the targeted attacks. This includes the bombing of Hazara educational centres, places of worship, hospitals and other centres. This trend is likely to continue, there have been massive attacks aimed purely at genocide against the Hazara in Afghanistan. Hazaras are in urgent need of protection in line with international obligations under the Genocide Convention.

Ladies and gentlemen, Afghanistan was the second Muslim country and the first SARC member country to officially join the International Criminal Court in February 2003. This was positive news for the people of Afghanistan, who had been suffering from war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide for more than four decades. Thus, expecting a strong international mechanism that can finish the culture of impunity, and hope that the war criminals and the perpetrators of the crime of genocide would be brought to Justice.

However, thus far, no practical action has been taken to implement the above. The prosecution of war and genocide criminals has not been actioned. Even the official investigation has not yet started in Afghanistan, although on 31 October of this year, pre-trial Chamber 2 of the International Criminal Court (ICC) authorised the prosecution to resume the investigation into the situation in Afghanistan. This may well be the beacon of hope for the people of Afghanistan which I strongly welcome and encourage, nevertheless, it is not enough.

As a woman from Afghanistan, I hope that the investigation proceeds as soon as possible. My request from ASP is to please kindly support the International Criminal Court both financially and morally for it to be actioned as an international mechanism to deal with war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide in the world. As a result, of bringing stability so that no criminal can escape from the Law. Lastly, I would like to ask the ICC to pay serious attention to the war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide in Afghanistan that is, unfortunately, taking place actively and thoroughly. As a civil society, that has a long history of the mentioned issues, we are ready to cooperate with the court in building on the foundations of long-term stability.

Afghanistan is unable to investigate and prosecute atrocity crimes, therefore, the world must step in. The Taliban must be held accountable as they may blatantly disregard their crimes but I am confident that the international community will not.

Thank you.