

Madam President, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Assembly,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address this Assembly today on behalf of the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization, Afghanistan Transitional Justice Coordination Group, and International Centre for Transitional Justice.

The people of Afghanistan have endured unimaginable suffering and loss. Our quest for justice and accountability is an urgent plea that echoes the sentiments of a people scarred by cycles of violence, criminality, and impunity.

Afghans are currently facing one of the worst human rights crises in the world.

Vulnerable groups including women and girls, ethnic and religious minorities such as the Hazara people, the LGBTQ community, members of the former government, and human rights defenders are subjected to violent attacks.

It has become a curse to be born female in Afghanistan.

The Taliban's all-male, gender apartheid regime has passed a litany of edicts that deprive Afghan women and girls of their most basic rights and freedoms, controlling every aspect of their lives aimed at excluding them from public life and the society.

The situation in Afghanistan calls for urgent, decisive, and coordinated action by the international community - and that includes the International Criminal Court.

Thousands of Afghan victims have been waiting for decades for justice - for the realization of what has been described by the ICC Prosecutor as a birthright.

My aunt whose husband was forcibly disappeared never recovered from the shock and loss. She waited all her life - hoping for his possible return. He never returned and she passed away a few years ago without justice, truth, and healing.

In the absence of domestic accountability mechanisms, the ICC remains the primary avenue for delivering justice to Afghan victims.

We call on the Office of the Prosecutor:

1. To ensure that its investigation addresses crimes committed by all sides of the conflict - the Taliban, ISKP, and national and international forces.
2. To avoid delays in its investigations and ensure timely access to justice.

We further urge members of this Assembly to support accountability efforts for Afghanistan by:

1. Supporting the ICC's investigations.
2. Supporting the inclusion of gender apartheid as a crime in the Draft Articles on Crimes Against Humanity - to allow responding to gender apartheid in Afghanistan and beyond.
3. For States involved militarily in Afghanistan, ensuring transparent and meaningful investigations into allegations of war crimes committed by their own forces, in accordance with the principle of complementarity.

Thank you for your attention.