AWPLN

SUMMARY REPORT

VOICE OF ISOLATED COMMUNITY FOR EMPOWERMENT

Canadian Room, Fairmont, Chateau Laurier, 1 Rideau St, Ottawa, Canada

Date: December 6, 2023



Report

Name of Event: Voice of Isolated Community for Empowerment
Location: Canadian Room, Fairmont, Chateau Laurier, 1 Rideau St, Ottawa, Canada
Date: December 6, 2023



On December 6, 2023, the Afghan Women Parliamentarians and Leaders Network (AWPLN) organized VOICE OF THE ISOLATED COMMUNITY in Ottawa, Canada, to discuss the situation of the women in Afghanistan and also the diaspora community in Canada. The event was moderated by Ms. Mobina Akbari board member of AWPLAN and attended by high-level representatives from the Canadian government, including officials from Canada's prime ministry office, elected members of parliament, representatives of international NGOs, former Afghanistan's government cabinet and former parliamentarians, Afghanistan's civil society leaders, and media journalists.

The event began with a performance of the Afghanistan national song by a young student from Afghanistan, which was inspirational and focused on the VOICE OF FREEDOM. After that, in the opening session, Ms. Nazifa Yousefi, the president of the Afghan Women Parliamentarians and Leaders Network (AWPLN), delivered her speech by welcoming the guests and highlighting the challenges that women are facing in Afghanistan. Ms. Nazifa He pointed out that women are living in the worst conditions in terms of rights in the last two years. They are deprived of all their fundamental rights and the Taliban



gender apartheid regime has not spared and means in suppressing women. She emphasized that gender apartheid exists in Afghanistan and called on international players to acknowledge this issue. She also announced the network's commitment to supporting Afghan women and thanked the Canadian government for its support.



Following Ms. Nazifa Zaki, MP Terry Duguid, parliament secretary to Justin Trudeau, prime minister of Canada addressed the event as the chief geust. He congratulated the Afghan Women Parliamentarians and Leaders' Network (AWPLN) for organizing an event that brings people together and encourages them to celebrate their diversity Terry Duguid also submitted the copy of prime Minister official speech to Ms. Nazifa Yousefi leader of Afghan women Parliamentarians and Leader’s network (AWPLN).

PRIME MINISTER · PREMIER MINISTRE

Message from the Prime Minister of Canada



It is with great honour that I welcome everyone to Parliament Hill for the event, Voice of Isolated Community for Empowerment.

In a country built by immigrants, the contributions that Afghan Canadians have made – and continue to make every day – to our shared nation, are indeed invaluable. Thank you for helping Canada become the greatest place to live in the world.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to those being honoured today at the award ceremony. Your hard work and dedication have led you to be recognized by your peers and your community. Thank you for all you have done for Canadians and for supporting Afghans in Canada.

I would also like to congratulate the Afghan Women Parliamentarians and Leaders Network for successfully organizing an event that brings people together and encourages them to celebrate their diversity.

Please accept my warmest regards.

Ottawa
2023

H.E. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada's Message



The subsequent speaker during the event was Ms. Jennifer Macintyre, Assistant Deputy Ministry IRCC, Afghanistan sector. In her address, Ms. Macintyre extended her congratulations to the network for their successful organization of the event. Furthermore, she emphasized the enduring commitment of Canada towards refugees, settlement, and human rights in Afghanistan.

H.E Hassan Soroush, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Canada, spoke next. He remarked on the awful status of the women and girls in Afghanistan under the Taliban. He alluded to the growing national and international calls for the condumening and punishment of gender apartheid in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's women and girls, he said, should be allowed to participate in all decision-making processes that affect their lives, including international gatherings and meetings within Afghanistan. Referring to the recent UN assessment of Afghanistan, he emphasized the need of Afghanistan's women sharing their concerns and thoughts on this document, as well as being actively participating in the necessary institutions and processes..



The following speaker was Dr. Nadina Christopuluo, the director and co-founder of Melissa Network Greece. During her address, she discussed how the network came to be. She believes it has huge promise for Afghan women and has committed to continuing to promote the network.

Panel Reports:



Following the guest speakers, the first panel discussion began focusing on the challenges and solutions for women's situations in Afghanistan. The discussion was moderated by Mr. Naeem Ayubzada, a practitioner of democracy development. Key speakers included Ms. Fazia Kofi, former MP of Afghanistan, Sardar Mohammad Rahman Ughly, a former Afghanistan Ambassador in Ukraine, Mr. Aziz Rafiee, CEO of the Afghanistan civil society Forum, Mr. Mirwais Balkhi, former minister of Afghanistan, and Masooma Khawari, former minister of telecommunications in Afghanistan. The panelists discussed various issues such as gender apartheid, the struggle for human rights, the updating human rights situation, the unknown condition of refugee women in third countries, and girls' education. They discussed these challenges professionally and provided practical recommendations as follows:

On Gender Aparthied:

- The international community should accept the nature of the gender apartheid regime of the Taliban and recognize them with this characteristic.
- The international community should put continuous pressure on the Taliban with all possible means, so that the rights of women are secured in any way possible and they are freed from the pressure and oppression of the Taliban.

On Minority Women:

- Among Afghan women who make up half of the society, there are women who are in the minority politically and religiously, and supporting these women is an important and vital issue.

- Women's entities and activities should coordinate their efforts and share the same voice towards the challenges that Afghan women face.

On Girls Education:

- In collaboration with international education groups, the network can provide support for self-governing schools in neighboring countries to provide education to girls who have relocated to complete their education.
- Collaboration between international non-governmental organizations and Afghanistan's education partners is required to establish an educational consortium that will ensure high-quality and efficient education for the children, with a particular focus on assisting females' education in the primary school years.
- Girls in Afghanistan currently have the chance to learn online, at least in Afghanistan's cities, if an acceesible free and widely available internet is available by the international supports.
- In order to increase the number of scholarships available to Afghan girls and enable them to pursue their education overseas, the network and other organizations play a crucial role in facilitating communication between girls in Afghanistan and international educational institutions to pursue the program.

On Civil Society and Women:

- The countries and allies of the Afghan people should support the presence of active women and their institutions by any means so that women can be a hope for women in Afghanistan and create pressure for change.

All of the panelists stressed how, acting as a catalyst, the Afghan women's parliamentary and leadership network can connect global capacities for women and girls. As a result, this network needs to keep modifying its offerings to reinforce efficient systems for helping women and girls.

The second panel in this event featured Afghan friends who discussed how they support women and girls in Afghanistan based on their own experiences and responsibilities.

***

Following the panel discussion, Mr. Yasir Naqvi, Member of Parliament for Ottawa Center, delivered a speech outlining Afghanistan's priority areas in gender equality and empowerment. He emphasized the importance of engaging newcomers in Canada's political and social spheres and encouraged them to aspire to positions as MPs or within the Canadian government. Mr. Naqvi congratulated the organizers on the successful event and pledged his support for this network's future initiatives.

The event was concluded by Ms. Mobina Akbari with a call for Afghanistan women and activists to work together to strengthen their involvement with Canadian institutions through advocacy. They must also press the United Nations to recognize gender apartheid in Afghanistan society. The program closed with an invitation to a dinner reception, which provided an excellent opportunity for networking. Furthermore, the participants were able to view paintings done by the Afghanistan’s Professional Women's Network.



The Afghan Parliamentarians Women and Leaders Network (APWLN) officially registered in Canada on April 5, 2023. The network comprises 20 former Afghan Members of Parliament, civil society members, and journalists. The primary goal of the APWLN is to promote and enhance women's empowerment on a global scale.

END