

Women in Peace & Transition Processes: [Afghanistan, 2001] BONN AGREEMENT 2001

December 2019

Name of process

Negotiations for the Bonn Agreement

Type of process

Peace-making

Outcome of process:

- The Bonn Agreement, which set out an ambitious 4 year plan for Afghanistan's political transition, was signed on 5 December 2001.
- An Afghan-run Interim Authority was immediately installed and a public forum called the Emergency Loya Jirga was convened six months later to agree on the structure and composition of a Transitional Administration (TA).
- The TA appointed a Constitutional Commission to draft a new constitution, which was ratified at a Constitutional Loya Jirga in early 2004.
- Parliamentary and Presidential elections were held in October 2004, and provincial elections in 2005.
- Independent Afghan Human Rights Commission was established
- Ministry of Women's Affairs was established.
- However, violence has continued in some provinces of the country to date.

Women's inclusion

- Direct representation at the negotiation table
- Observers
- Consultative forum
- Advisors to the negotiating parties
- Mass action

Women's influence

Intermediate level of influence due to:

- Supportive attitudes of mediators, facilitators and regional and international actors due to the women-related injustices that happened under Taliban rule.
- Three out of 25 signatories of the Bonn Agreement were women.
- At the official parallel UN civil society consultative forum, 40% of participants were women.
- Gender supportive selection criteria of those participating in the formal and consultative process, though the criteria were not transparent as the process was rushed.
- Due to the strong gender and women provisions in the agreement, women could assert influence in the such as the Constitutional Loya Jirga or the commissions, and managed to incorporate articles supporting linguistic rights for minorities, human rights provisions, family rights, etc. and doubling the representation allotted to women in parliament.
- The strong patriarchal structure of Afghanistan's society poses a constant challenge to women's participation and influence.
- The exclusion of the major conflict party, the Taliban, and the subsequent ongoing violence had negative implications for the implementation of the agreement and the political transition in Afghanistan as a whole.

Afghanistan (2001-2005)

The Bonn Agreement, formally entitled the 'Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions' was signed on 5 December 2001 and established the Afghan Interim Authority (AIA), and spelled out a timeline towards elections and constitution-making. The timeline included electing a Transitional Authority through an Emergency Loya Jirga (ELJ), a constitution making process through a Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ), and finally overseeing parliamentary and presidential elections.

Women had an intermediate influence on the negotiation process. Thanks to the support of the mediators, and national and international actors involved in

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the process, women were included in each delegation, either as full members or as advisors. Three out of the 25 signatories of the agreement and 40 per cent of those present in the consultative forums set up by the UN to inform the negotiations, were women. Furthermore, Afghan women in the Diaspora especially those in Pakistan, Europe and the US also organized public demonstrations to inform the process.

The Bonn Agreement established a Ministry of Women's Affairs and included provisions for the inclusion of women in subsequent processes and governing structures, agreeing to the "establishment of a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government."¹ Ultimately however, the 2001 Bonn process was rushed, and excluded key actors, namely the Taliban, which generally limited a conducive environment for its implementation. The strong patriarchal structure of Afghan society has also been a limiting factor for women's influence. Given these constraints, nevertheless, women were able to asset considerable influence on the negotiation and implementation process, enabled by the influence of the international community that ensued women were included in most structures. Security challenges, however, has been the greatest obstacle for women. Women's rights have suffered targeted attacks from the Taliban among others and it has been an incredible impediment to activists and the rights-based community in Afghanistan in general.

I. Background

Afghanistan's strategic location has contributed to a series of repressive regimes, and decades of armed conflict and war. In 2001, before the US-led invasion that overthrew the Taliban regime, Afghanistan was one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 169 out of 174 on the Human Development Index (HDI).² Since then, remarkable strides have been made in the economic front³ but the country continues to rank poorly, on the HDI (168 in 2017).⁴ It is at 154 on the Gender Inequality Index reflecting poorly in areas of women's reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity.⁵ Compared to 35 percent of men, fewer than nine percent of women have at least a secondary education and female participation in the labor market is 19.1 percent compared to 83.6 for men.⁶

Afghanistan is a historically multi-ethnic society, which is composed of four main ethnic groups, namely Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras.⁷ While a reliable census does not exist, Pashtuns are estimated to be the largest ethnic group (the Taliban is predominantly a Pashtun movement but also includes recruits from the other ethnic groups. Many Afghans would also point to their Pakistan base and membership), their social values also shaped the general conditions experienced by Afghani women. Traditional communities, particularly in Pashtun-dominated parts of the country, view women as socially incomplete and subject to male control.⁸ As such, Afghan women have been historically isolated from social and political spaces.

In the 1920s, King Amanullah led a campaign against the veil and polygamy, and encouraged girls to attend school. Queen Soraya publicly unveiled and spoke about the need for Afghanistan to benefit from the service of women, as well as men.⁹

However, there was a severe backlash among rural ethnic tribal leaders.¹⁰ In 1929, the King was forced into exile and his successor retracted any progress towards gender equality. Beginning in the 1930s, the monarchy instituted a more gradual approach to advancing women's rights. In 1942 the first girls' secondary schools were established. Under the reign of King Zahir Shah and President Daoud, veiling was changed from compulsory to voluntary; women were accorded the right to vote in the 1964 constitution, introduced into the workforce and in parliament, and women, particularly in urban areas, attended college, ran businesses and were actively involved in public life.

Following a bloody coup in 1978 by communists allied with the Soviet Union, a massive campaign was undertaken to eradicate traditional cultural and religious values. A key element of this was instituting a radical reform of women's rights. Women's education increased, and there were more women in parliament. The Revolutionary Association for the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) was founded in 1977, as an independent political/social organization of Afghan women fighting for human rights and for social justice in Afghanistan.¹¹ However, this period of liberalization was followed by a backlash among religious conservatives and repression of women's rights, including some cases of shootings of women wearing western clothes.¹²

Following nine years of guerrilla warfare between the USSR and the Afghan government and insurgent groups known as the Mujahedeen (supported by the USA, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia) in 1989 the Soviets completed their withdrawal from the country. In 1992, the rule of the pro-Soviet People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) collapsed with several Mujahedeen groups vying for control of Kabul and the country as a whole. The civil war among these groups was marked by a number of atrocities, with Mujahedeen groups regularly targeting civilians and a wave of killings, rape, and extortion across the country. Starting in the south in 1994, the Taliban under the leadership of Mullah Omar began to expand their power, claiming Kabul in 1996, ending the brief and unstable rule of the Mujahedeen.

Following a radical and extreme interpretation of Islam, the Taliban eradicated virtually all rights for women and severely repressed minorities, and instituted rigorous religious instructions for men and women. They established the Department for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, tasked with monitoring civilians' behavior.¹³ Women were forced to wear full burqas and had to be accompanied in public by a man; girls' schools were closed; and men had to grow beards.¹⁴ Women were banned from formal work, and from accessing healthcare and excluded from virtually all forms of public life.¹⁵

In 2001, following the attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September, the US declared its "war on terror" and invaded Afghanistan. It allied with the Northern Alliance with the aim of defeating the Taliban. After the official launch of US and coalition military operations against the Taliban, women's empowerment became a rallying point in order to mobilize public sentiment in support of the war.¹⁶ President George W. Bush referred to the Taliban regime as terrorists and also highlighted

its mistreatment of women.¹⁷ Other world leaders, including UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Kofi Annan, US Secretary of State Colin Powell, and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair cited the exclusion of women and severe degradation of women's rights as critical barriers to restoring peace in Afghanistan. "There cannot be true peace and recovery in Afghanistan without a restoration of the rights of women," stated UNSG Kofi Annan,¹⁸ giving women's rights activists a platform on which to advocate for greater political representation and inclusion.¹⁹ These international attitudes set the stage for greater women's inclusion in the political talks that followed the defeat of the Taliban in November 2001.

Between 27 November and 5 December 2001, Afghan political parties, including factions of the Northern Alliance, as well as international players such as the UN, gathered in Bonn, Germany, to negotiate an agreement detailing the process for rebuilding a government in Afghanistan. Women were directly represented at the negotiation table, either as full members of the delegations or as advisors to the delegations. The UN also set up a civil society consultative forum alongside the formal negotiations between 29 November and 2 December, which included women and youth participants.

On 4 December 2001, participants of the conference signed the Bonn Agreement in the presence of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. The Bonn Agreement laid the foundation for Afghanistan's transition process. It also called for the establishment of a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government.²⁰ The Agreement noted the "importance of the participation of women" throughout the process, including their representation in administrative and governance bodies, as well as commissions established to investigate human rights violations and implement the Bonn Agreement.

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was ratified by the Afghan government in 2003, 23 years after the signing of the Convention in 1980.²¹ Presidential and parliamentary elections were held in October 2004. Women won 68 out of 249 of the seats in parliament (roughly 27 percent).

Today, there are some 175 women's NGOs registered under the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the biggest being the Afghan Women's Network with 65 NGO members and over 2,500 individual members. Women NGOs are active in service delivery, information campaigns, and implementation of projects in health and education.²² These women's organizations have been able to increase their visibility within the country after the fall of the Taliban regime, which particularly targeted and undermined women's rights.²³

The Bonn Agreement was criticized on the grounds that it failed to satisfactorily address security issues. While women were accorded equality and the Afghan constitution is the most progressive in the region, many of these rights have not been implemented. The main reasons are to be found in a combination of the ongoing war

and the absence of security, which in turn supports the absence of rule of law and ongoing patriarchic backlashes.

Actors Involved in the Process

The formal UN-led Bonn negotiations included four Afghan groups united in their opposition to the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. It was dominated by delegates of the Northern Alliance, the main anti-Taliban armed force on the ground. Also present were delegates from three other groups representing Afghans living in exile: the Rome Group, linked to the former king Mohammad Zahir Shah; the Cyprus Group, representing Afghan exiles and former Mujahadeen fighters close to Iran; and the Peshawar Group, headed by Pakistan-backed Pashtun leader Pir Gailan. None of the Taliban and Al Qaeda groups was invited to participate in the negotiations.²⁴ The Bonn Agreement is seen as a “victor’s peace” for this reason.

Negotiations were closed meetings, chaired by Lakdhar Brahimi, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Afghanistan and former foreign minister of Algeria.²⁵ The US, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia and other governments were invited to send delegates or observers to Bonn and shared the same living and working facility as the Afghan representatives during the week-long negotiation, providing space for informal lobbying and back-channel negotiation.²⁶ However, formal negotiations were exclusively between members of the Afghan delegations.

In parallel to the official track 1 negotiation, the UN set up a civil society consultative forum between 29 November and 2 December. Modelled on a similar mechanism established during the Guatemalan peace process,²⁷ the forum had an official mandate to advise the track 1 process through the mediation team. 150 representatives from civil society took part in the forum, a third of whom were invited from Afghanistan and the rest from the diaspora, including women and youth. The forum was facilitated by a Swiss and a German think tank.

Women Involved in the Process

Women were included in the Bonn Agreement negotiations through direct representation at the negotiation table as members of and advisors to the formal delegations and as observers. Women also participated in the UN-led civil society consultative forum, making up about 40% of the 150 civil society representatives.

Along the margins of the conference in Bonn, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) supported women’s organizations to convene the Afghan Women’s Summit for Democracy in Brussels from 4 to 5 December.²⁸ This conference of about 40 Afghan women leaders including some of those also present in Bonn culminated in the Brussels Proclamation, a declaration making recommendations for specific policy reforms and action in different sectors impacting Afghan women.²⁹ Here, women called for their involvement in the development planning for Afghanistan, particularly in the areas of education, health, human rights, constitution-making, and

displacement. The proclamation demanded the rebuilding and reopening of schools which had been closed or destroyed by the Taliban, and a healthcare system that supported women's health and family planning.

It is important to note that this case study does not cover the process and outcomes associated with the Brussels summit. While the Brussels Proclamation may have been important for galvanizing support for greater women's participation in the wider peacebuilding process, the conference did not directly impact the outcome of talks in Bonn due to both the closed-door nature of the negotiations and the timing of the conference.

Additionally, Afghan women in the diaspora, especially those in Pakistan, were instrumental in organizing campaigns and public rallies to put pressure on negotiating parties to include gender-sensitive provisions in the Agreement. RAWA's attempts in this regard are particularly noteworthy.

Modalities of Inclusion of Women's Groups

Women's participation in the negotiations in Bonn was an important milestone for Afghanistan, marking the shift from a highly exclusive society under Taliban rule to a more inclusive one. Despite significant resistance from conflict parties and important stakeholders, and the extremely short timeline of the negotiations, women participated in the talks through several modalities of inclusion. Women were directly represented at the negotiation table, either as full members of the delegations or as advisors to the delegations. Furthermore, women's voices were captured in parallel consultations, designed to advise the official process. Women also took part in mass actions in advance of and during the negotiations.

1 | Direct Representation at the Negotiation Table

Inclusion within Negotiation Delegations

A total of five women were directly involved at the negotiation table at Bonn, either as members of their respective delegations or as advisers to the represented groups. Women's rights activists Sima Wali and Rona Mansuri were full delegates of the Rome process, linked to former king Mohammad Zahir Shah, and activist Amena Afzali was an official delegate of the Northern Alliance.³⁰ Not all groups participating in the Bonn Agreement negotiations agreed to include women as full or official delegates. Two groups instead included women as official advisers: Seddiqa Balkhi served as an advisor to the Cyprus group and Fatana Gilani was an advisor to the Peshawar group.³¹ In total, three out of the 25 signatories to the Agreement were women.³²

2 | Consultations

Formal Consultations

Women's perspectives were also included through consultations carried out by the civil society consultative forum, established by the UN from 29 November – 2 December 2001 as part of a parallel process with an official mandate to provide advice to the track 1 process. This process included consultations with 150 civil society representatives from within Afghanistan and the diaspora, 40 percent of whom were women. Though the forum had an official mandate to discuss issues and advise the track I negotiations, it was clearly an externally-driven exercise. The reason for establishing such a forum was to give the process more legitimacy in the absence of the main party to the conflict. A Swiss and a German think tank were asked set up and facilitate the process.

Like the parties to the conflict, civil society was extremely polarized and therefore often failed to reach consensus on specific issues.³³ Nevertheless, the participants had both formal and informal exchanges with the mediator and the formal negotiation delegations, and were able to express their broad lines of demands, including with regard to women's rights. Additionally, in some instances the UN tried to influence the forum's demands to help the track 1 process, which at times risked negatively influencing the body's legitimacy.³⁴

3 | Mass Action

A series of mass demonstrations and campaigns were organised by women actors after the toppling of the Taliban regime. Due to the oppression of the Taliban, Afghani women activists were mainly organised outside Afghanistan. In neighbouring Pakistan, two influential women groups mobilised masses to propose an agenda to those involved in the peace negotiations in a manner conducive to address themes and topics affecting women in Afghanistan.

RAWA organized demonstration rallies in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad.³⁵ RAWA's demands directly focused on women's inclusion in the peace talks. They mobilised a three-day demonstration in Islamabad where Afghani women from the Diaspora actively joined and demanded inclusion. Another important group was The Afghan Women's Council (AWC) which was established in 1993 in Peshawar. AWC's campaign emphasised the overall weaknesses in the Afghani legal system which prevented women from general social inclusion. AWC organized mass campaigns to put pressure on the negotiating actors to address issues such as laws allowing marriage-rape. In all these demonstrations, CEDAW and other international conventions were used as a platform for advocacy by women's rights groups and women's representatives.

II. Analysis of Women's Influence: Enabling and Constraining Factors

The following section sets out a number of process and context factors that either enabled or constrained the influence of women in Bonn Agreement negotiations.

Process Factors

1 | Non-transparent Selection Criteria and Procedures:

The selection criteria for the formal negotiation process were vague and undefined. It was therefore criticized for not being inclusive in a manner that addressed different divisions in Afghan society.

The process was also rushed, when considering it only took place a month after the defeat of the Taliban and was wrapped up in a week. The overall goal of the process was to initiate an interim government that would lead the country to elections, with the underlying aim of establishing a government so that certain groups could not assume control of the country through military means, which in all likelihood would have led to another civil war. Therefore, the process mainly concentrated on this goal and pragmatically sought shortcuts to this end.

For the UN-instituted consultative forum, there were no formal criteria such as a formal quota for women or other groups due to the short time for preparation. However, similar to the formal process, the international community ensured that women were invited in good numbers (40%) and included in the forum.

2 | Decision-making:

Five women were directly represented at the negotiation table in Bonn, three as members and two as advisors of their respective delegations. However, decision-making was mainly done by powerful actors outside of the talks and the party identity was certainly more important than gender identity.

The consultative forum was not a formal decision making forum. However, women present were able to influence the process by raising topics and themes affecting women in Afghanistan and bringing them to the attention of the formal negotiators. For example, during discussions at the consultative forum, a young woman spoke passionately about what little attention the plight of Afghani women and youth received in the peace talks. Her input had a uniting effect within the forum that enabled it to break a deadlock to come up with joint positions. The young woman spoke about how the insecurities of women (especially young women) are systematically neglected within the talks and how this weakens the potential of the transition to produce an inclusive peace. Her input in combination with the

international community's push for women's rights certainly helped in the realization of gender-sensitive outcomes especially concerning the implementation process.

3 | Transfer, Communication and Advocacy Strategies:

The period between the end of the Taliban rule and finalization of the Bonn Agreement witnessed a surge of mass demonstrations and campaigns organized by civil society women's groups such as RAWA and AWC outside Afghanistan as they were subject to direct threats from the Taliban regime. These groups were thus not formally included in the talks. Yet their advocacy was important in the adoption of certain gender-sensitive proposals in the final agreement.

A critical moment during the consultative forum arrived in the form of a powerful statement made by a 17-year-old Afghan woman. In tears, she declared that she could no longer respect her elders if they continued to attack each other while the country falls apart. "It is my future, my generation's future, you are talking about"³⁶ she said. Moved by her statement, participants agreed that she should repeat her statement to the negotiating parties in the formal process. At the same time, facilitators of the consultative forum organised press statements for her so that her message would reach a wider constituency and pressurize the parties. Her statement ultimately had an important impact in making the participants and the mediator reach an agreement.

Finally, the establishment of permanent commissions as a follow-up of the Bonn process secured women's participation in subsequent processes. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), established in 2002 as mandated by the Bonn Agreement, was responsible for human rights monitoring, investigation of violations of human rights, and development of domestic human rights institutions.³⁷ The AIHRC was chaired by women's rights activist, Dr. Sima Samar (she was also one of the Vice Chairs of the Interim Government). Furthermore, five out of the 11 commissioners were women. The commission included a Women's Rights Unit, responsible for monitoring the situation of women and working towards the elimination of "discriminatory attitudes towards women in Afghan society."³⁸ However, in other key initiatives of the AIHRC, a gender perspective is seen missing. For example, a consultation process led by the Transitional Justice Unit to understand the hardships and experiences of Afghans failed to include questions specific to the experiences of women.³⁹

The Bonn Agreement also established the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and women were directly represented in the interim administration, albeit only two out of the thirty members were women. This includes Dr. Sima Samar, Vice-Chair and Women's Affairs representative, and Dr. Suhaila Seddiqi, Representative for the Department of Public Health.

4 | Attitudes of Conflict Parties:

In the days leading up to the start of the Bonn Conference, it was not clear if women would be included as they had thus far been largely excluded from politics and public

decision-making in Afghanistan. Conflict parties strongly resisted the inclusion of women delegates, and the short timeframe of the Bonn Agreement negotiations did not lend itself to any significant influence from actors beyond the main conflict parties. However, the brutal treatment of women under the Taliban regime had already brought women's rights to the forefront of the international community's post-Taliban peace and reform agenda. Represented groups were, therefore, under immense pressure from the United Nations and the international community to include women in their delegations.

The absence of the Taliban during the talks – despite its negative connotations in achieving a permanent solution to the conflict – had a positive effect; that of inclusion of women. As such, attitudes of the negotiating parties towards inclusion of women were generally positive and enabling especially concerning the modalities of direct representation and representation in consultative forums and inclusive commissions.

5 | Supportive Attitudes of Mediators for Women's Inclusion:

As mentioned above, the Taliban regime's systematic oppression of women made women's rights an important agenda item of the international community in their efforts geared towards rebuilding post-Taliban Afghanistan. Therefore, the situation of women in Afghanistan received special attention in the political agenda of the mediators. Women were thus a part of the negotiation process right from the beginning, and gained influence during the process as was evident by their inclusion in formal organs such as the AIHRC that was enforced and mandated by the Bonn Agreement.

6 | Early Involvement of Women in the Process:

The swift nature of the Taliban defeat and their resulting weak position enabled the international community to hold a strong position over the talks. The peace talks and the negotiation process were established from the outside with the direct initiative of the international community. This heavy involvement of outside powers created an environment conducive for the inclusion of women in the formal negotiation process from the very beginning. Moreover, outside the formal process, women in the diaspora were actively involved in mass mobilisation right from the time Taliban was ousted.

7 | Funding:

Overall, the formal negotiation process was mandated and funded by the international community through the United Nations. The funding of the process was agreed at the very first meeting of the Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group held in Brussels. During the talks, participants reaffirmed the importance of channelling funds through the UN which ultimately created an enabling environment for women's inclusion due to UN's normative stands.⁴⁰

For mass action, RAWA mainly relied on donations.⁴¹

Context Factors

1 | Regional and International Actors:

International actors such as the UN were highly supportive of the overall process and also the inclusion of women in post-conflict talks. It was largely due to the unyielding stance of the international community that negotiating parties included women representatives.

Regional actors such as Pakistan and India also played supportive roles in pushing for the inclusion of women in the peace process. Pakistan especially had hosted thousands of Afghan refugees and had legitimate concerns regarding the peace process. Pakistan also allowed women in the Afghan diaspora to stage a series of mass demonstrations in Peshawar and Islamabad in order to raise awareness on women's demands in the peace process.⁴² The positive attitudes of both Pakistan and India were facilitating factors for mass action and mobilisation of Afghan women activists.

2 | Early Elite Resistance overcome and turned into Support:

Due to the insistence of international actors, initial elite resistance to the inclusion of women as an unnecessary addition to the talks subsequently gave way to support for such inclusion so as to ensure the smooth occurrence of negotiations.

3 | Public Buy-in:

Afghan society had a strong willingness to transition to a stable and peaceful environment after periods of long lasting instability, turmoil, wars and violence. This attitude manifested in general public support for the overall peace talks. Including women in the process was seen as a breakaway from the past associated with the Taliban's brutality.

4 | Attitudes and Expectations Surrounding Societal Gender Roles:

Culturally, Afghan society can be characterized as dominated by a patriarchal structure in which women, particularly in rural areas, are discouraged or prevented from participating in public life.⁴³ The initial attitudes of the elites towards the political inclusion of women in the Bonn negotiations reflected this. A survey found that 88 percent of men and 85 percent of women believe that "women need their husband's permission to vote." Most men said women need men's advice on who to vote for.⁴⁴ This meant that although women were included in the process as a result of the power of the international community, women's meaningful inclusion in the long-run still has a long way to go.

III. Conclusion

The oppression women suffered at the hands of the Taliban made the international community insist on both the inclusion of women in peace talks and ensuring gender-sensitive outcomes of the Bonn Agreement. The Agreement contained several clauses related to gender, including the “establishment of a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government.”⁴⁵ While it did not set minimum quotas for women’s participation in subsequent processes, the language did set a precedent for women’s representation in future negotiating bodies. For example, the provisions in the Bonn Agreement helped women secure direct representation in the ELJ in 2002. Women comprised about 12 percent of the nearly 1,600 delegates who were selected through a local election process.⁴⁶ Their participation, however, was marred by intimidation, threats, and harassment and ultimately the ELJ was not the democratic process it set out to be. The CLJ had a greater proportion of women than the ELJ, representing about 20 percent of the 502 delegates. Despite the fact that women’s participation was limited and challenged by severe levels of intimidation from warlords present in the negotiations, women were quite effective in asserting influence.

Overall, as a result of the Bonn Agreement, women’s presence is felt more and their influence has increased in Afghan politics and society over time. The precedent set by the Agreement for women’s inclusion and safeguarding of women’s rights is thus commendable. Nevertheless, the exclusion of the Taliban from the negotiations and the resulting continuation of violence in the country coupled with the general patriarchal character of Afghan society, means the inclusion of women is an ongoing challenge that is up for permanent re-negotiations.

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Women in Peace and Transition Processes

Case studies in this series are based on findings of the “Broadening Participation in Political Negotiations and Implementation” research project (2011–2017), a multi-year comparative research project led by Dr. Thania Paffenholz at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva. The Broadening Participation project examines how and under which conditions various actors participate in and influence peace and political transition processes. The project’s dataset so far comprises 40 mainly qualitative case studies of negotiation and implementation processes, which took place between 1989 and 2014, covering 34 countries. These cases are categorized according to a range of groups of included actors and a framework of seven inclusion modalities developed by Dr. Thania Paffenholz. Among the case studies examined in the framework of this project, 28 included measurable involvement of women. In this context, women were defined as relatively organized groups, including delegations of women, women’s civil society organizations, coalitions or networks, which sought inclusion in peace negotiations and the implementation of agreements. The project did not investigate the role of women as mediators. For more information, see: www.inclusivepeace.org.

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The Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative (IPTI) is dedicated to evidence-based research and its transfer to policy and practice. The objective of the initiative is to support sustainable peace by providing expertise and information on the inclusion of diverse actors in peace and transition processes. This expertise is drawn from a collection of research projects that have been conducted for nearly a decade at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva under the lead of Dr. Thania Paffenholz.

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