



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Intervention of

Ambassador Philippe Kridelka, Permanent Representative
of Belgium to the United Nations

Session on the situation in Afghanistan Security Council

New York, 3/9/2020

Mr. President,
Dear colleagues,

I too want to thank SRSB Lyons and Saad Mohseni for their briefings.

All eyes are currently on Doha where we the **intra-Afghan talks**, hopefully, will mark the beginning of the end of the conflict. The gains of the past two decennia – in particular with regards to human rights and women’s empowerment - cannot be lost in the resulting agreement. We urge all sides to guarantee meaningful participation of women in the negotiations. The implementation of the political agreement is a prerequisite for the peace process to go forward. We therefore welcome the presentation of a cabinet.

Violence must be reduced. We welcome the Eid ceasefires and call on all parties and in particular the Taliban to take immediate steps towards a permanent and comprehensive reduction in violence. A humanitarian ceasefire will build confidence for the peace negotiations and provide much needed relief for the Afghan people. I reiterate our position regarding the **sanctions for the Taliban**: there can only be a discussion on delisting members from the 1988 regime if the conditions of Resolution 2513 are met, including the start of intra-Afghan negotiations and a reduction of violence. We furthermore condemn the widespread use of Improvised Explosive Devices that cause many of the civilian casualties of the conflict. We also specifically condemn recent threats and attacks against human rights defenders and journalists and call for the perpetrators to be promptly brought to justice. As Mr. Mohseni rightly emphasized: the role of the press and media freedom is essential to develop a pluralistic and sustainable form of governance in Afghanistan.

I want to underline the importance of the fight against impunity and the need for **transitional justice** in Afghanistan. We welcome UNAMA’s work, and SRSB Lyons’ focus, on victim-centered justice.

Belgium is particularly concerned about the enormous toll the conflict in Afghanistan has on the country’s most vulnerable: its **children**. According to UN figures it is the world’s most deadly conflict for children. We urge all parties to put an end to the grave violations of children’s rights in Afghanistan

and request the Secretary-General to continue to give priority to the child protection activities and capacity of UNAMA. This capacity must be further developed and we wish to see the future mandate prioritize this topic.

In conclusion I want to reiterate Belgium's strong commitment to accompany the Afghan people on their path towards prosperity and peace.

Thank you.