

Program of the international Afghanistan Conference

First announcement (as of 10.02.)



The Future of Afghanistan – Challenges for Peace, Development, and Democracy

25.-27. April 2014, Strasbourg, CIARUS

Organizers:

International Network No to War – No to NATO

In Cooperation with:

Cooperation for Peace (Germany), German-Afghan Peace Network, Collectif national OTAN-Afghanistan (France), and Mouvement de la Paix (France)

With the Support of:

Rosa Luxemburg Foundation and European Left

Supported by numerous Afghan Organizations and Initiatives from Europe and Afghanistan:

Afghan Bedmoschk Solar Center (Germany)
Afghan Islamic Centre (Netherlands)
Afghan Islamic Society, Hamburg (Germany)
Afghan Peace Makers, Hamburg (Germany)
Afghanistan Committee for Peace, Reconstruction and Culture, Berlin (Germany)
Association for Afghan Refugees in Europe
Ayenda Movement of Afghanistan (Afghanistan)
Coalition of Democratic and Progressive Organizations of Afghanistan (Afghanistan)
Commission for Alliance and Understanding
Commission for Peace and Freedom in Afghanistan (Germany)
Committee Defense of Human Rights in Afghanistan (Germany)
Cultural Committee of Afghans in Baden-Wurttemberg (Germany)
Ensemble of Afghan Cultural Organizations in Hamburg (Germany)
Federation of Afghan Journalists (Afghanistan)
Humanitarian Aid for Afghanistan, Freiburg (Germany)
Independent Organization for the support of Afghans, Alsace (France)
Islamic Alliance of Afghans in France (France)
Islamic Committee of Independent Journalists in Afghanistan (Afghanistan)
Lawyers of Kabul's Organization for Justice (Afghanistan)
Organization for Women's Rights in Afghanistan (Germany)
Organization of Afghan Refugees in Berlin (Germany)
Organization of Afghans in Bremen (Germany)
Progressive Community of Afghanistan, Heidelberg (Germany)
Student Body of the University of Kabul (Afghanistan)

Statement of Intent

2014 could be a key year for the future development in Afghanistan.

The partial withdrawal of NATO troops encompasses a highly controversial reformulation of Afghanistan's relation to the USA and NATO. This will similarly affect Afghanistan and its so-called Western support.

The presidential and parliamentary elections – however “haggled over” and corrupt these may have been – still point to a specific change in political thinking, reveal power constellations, and create new possibilities.

The danger of continuing this asymmetric war has become increasingly virulent, and the fear of terror and drone attacks is more present than ever.

In this context, we all know:

The war in Afghanistan has taken a terrible toll on its people. Over the last 33 years, presumably no Afghan citizen in or outside Afghanistan has been able to avoid the negative consequences and effects of war.

We know that the situation in Afghanistan - martial and brutal - has been created by domestic and foreign governments. But it can be reversed by the will and the actions of the (Afghan) people. Together we will continue to work for the right to self-determination, peace, freedom, and for a life in harmony with the nature. We know that a prerequisite for this is to end the occupation by foreign troops and the war itself. For this reason we are once again calling for withdrawal of foreign troops, an immediate cease-fire and universal respect for Afghanistan's sovereignty. The proposed reduction of the NATO troops cannot be equated with a withdrawal of the interventional forces.

The future of Afghanistan must lie in the hands of the Afghan people. It should be achieved through peace, with regard to their culture and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. The ongoing negotiations and coalition-building between the different societal and religious groups should be escalated. Only by cooperating and working closely together will they find ways to achieve peace in their country and the region.

We need a solution for peace not only for Afghanistan, but also for the region as a whole; all countries in the region should be engaged in the process.

We know very well that the path to peace is not an easy one; that it has its challenges and is not going to be achieved without sacrifices. And the major challenges of the year 2014 are dialogue and reconciliation.

For this reason we would like to encourage a discussion on the central challenges, this country and its citizens face. Also important are the challenges all peace-willing people are currently facing in attempts to organize this international congress.

The debate should include following ideas:

We are convinced that peace in a free and self-determined, gender-just Afghanistan can only be achieved through the active participation of the Afghan civil society, including women, with the strong international solidarity and support of peace and social

movements. For that purpose, a close partnership among all peace and freedom loving people (in and outside Afghanistan and their organizations) is considered vital and any sectarian divide harmful.

The foundation of any successful help for Afghanistan should be guided by the wishes of the Afghan people, then coordinated by local and regional communities. It should be a “help to self-help-project”, channeled through a legitimate government in line with the country’s culture, human rights groups, and decentralized grass roots structures. Education for all children and health care are of highest priority. Any neoliberal influence and plundering by foreign forces/companies must stop and an own path of development has to be taken. Sustainability of Afghan development is imperative. NATO members have to take responsibility for the catastrophic civil, economic, and environmental consequences of the war. Those who caused the damage have to take responsibility.

The exile Afghan community in Europe supported by the organizations from the European Peace Movement and the Afghan organization wants to actively work for peace in Afghanistan by conducting a **conference: The Future of Afghanistan - Challenges for Peace, Development, and Democracy**.

We will develop ideas and activities for the complete withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan and for supporting the transition process in the country.

We want an open congress – one which is actively searching for answers, but at the same time one that is aware of its limits and its position of political helplessness.

Among others, the following questions should be discussed:

- What has to be done to empower governmental and non-governmental initiatives and structures for independent politics to reach the complete withdrawal of foreign troops and to restore the full sovereignty of the country?
- How could a process of peace and reconciliation be shaped in Afghanistan, which could also foster security and closer cooperation in the region?
- How could a regional conflict resolution integrate governments, national coalitions and civil societies/ peace movements be improved? How can a process of reconciliation be initiated and authoritarian rulers overcome – regardless of the elections’ outcomes?
- Which role do negotiations with the “Taliban” (the Shorish Plan) play? How can national coalitions like the National Front (FATWA against foreign troops) or people like Faruq Azam, piece on who he is, be helped and supported?
- How can the violence and suppression against women be stopped? How can emancipation, participation and empowerment of women in Afghanistan be revised?
- From a peace movements’ perspective, i.e. from the perspective of anti-neoliberal developing organizations, what can be done to reach a sustainable development plan for Afghanistan? What do “help to self-help” and independent access to resources mean today?
- Do we need a new definition of development in Afghanistan?
- How can self-subsistence and food sovereignty be reached?
- What does it mean for Afghanistan to overcome the neoliberal developing model?
- How can empowerment of people and especially of women in Afghanistan be improved?
- What can be done internationally to strengthen an independent civil society with mainly decentralized projects?
- Which role should international organizations (especially the United Nations) play in the “post 2014”-process?
- How can the existing cooperation of fragmented forces in exile/national communities become strengthened include new forces and coalitions for more “participation, democracy, peace and development”? Does this include the creation of a new international platform as a political tool?

The preparation for this conference is an open process. You are kindly invited to support and to participate in this process and to take the opportunity provided by the conference in Strasbourg.

PROGRAM

Friday, October 11th

18:30 - 21:30

Opening:

by Reiner Braun (IALANA, IPB) and Claire Chastain (No to War – No to NATO)

18:45 - 19:00

Opening Lecture: Historical and Current Perspectives

by Peter Scholl-Latour

19:00 - 21:45

Plenary: Afghanistan at the Cross Road

Siddiq Mansor Ansari (Chairman of the Federation of Afghanistan's Civil Society), Faruq Azam (Mediator), Karim Popal (Lawyer of the victims of Kundus massacre, IALANA), Wahid Mozhdha (National Coalition against foreign troops in Afghanistan)

Moderation: Wahida Kabir, Farida Seleman, Rahim Safi

Round Table: The Role of the International Peace Movement – Struggling against Foreign Troops and Supporting Development for Peace

Reiner Braun, Yves-Jeans Gallas (Mouvement de la Paix), Claudia Haydt (European Left), Ludo de Brabander (vrede vzw, Belgium)

Moderation: Hannelore Tölke (German-Afghan Peace Network)

Saturday, October 12th

10:00 - 10:15

Opening Address

by Francis Wurtz

10:15 - 11:45

Presentation with Discussion: “Democracy and Islam”

by Dr. Karim Soroush (Iran) (tbc)

12:00 - 14:00

Panel: After the Presidential Elections - Ways to a Peaceful and Democratic Afghanistan

by Mullah Saeef (former ambassador of Taliban to Pakistan, former press speaker of Taliban), Hafi-Zullah Rasekh (Solidarity Party), Fahim Ada (Coalition of Democratic and Progressive Organizations of Afghanistan) (tbc), Amin Karim (Islamic Party Afghanistan), Naquibullah Shorish (Representative of the Kharoti), Otto Jäckel (IALANA), Tobias Pflüger (IMI)

Moderation: Kathrin Vogler (MdB, Die Linke), Marie-Christine Vergiat (MEP, GUE-NGL)

15:30 - 17:00

Working Groups: Visions for a Peaceful, Participative, Sustainable and Democratic Future of Afghanistan under Consideration of the Elections

(with responsible persons and contact details)

- **2014: The Future of Women Rights – Participation of Women**
(Wahida Kabir, wahidakabir@hotmail.com, Kristine Karch, Kristine@kkarch.de)
- **Peace and Human Rights**
(Sohaila Alekozai, Karim Popal, info@kanzlei-popal.de, Dr Taraqi)
- **Visions of the Youth**
(Fawad Zazai, Daud Seleman, david_seleman@hotmail.com, Jonas Popal jonaspopal@hotmail.de)
- **Socio-Economic Development and Corruption**
(Pascal Luig, pascal.luig@ialana.de, Jawid Nasery)
- **Process of Transformation: Afghanistan after 2014**
(Nohman Manawi, manawi@voila.fr, Nader Kabiri, kabiritransport@aol.com)
- **Sustainable Economic and Agricultural Development – But How?**
(Lucas Wirl, l.wirl@gmx.net)
- **Afghanistan and its Region**
(Claire Chastain, claire.chastain@gmail.com, Bashir Wared, wared@email.de)
- **Civil Aid – But How?**
(Farida Seleman, farida.seleman@hotmail.de)
- **Democracy – Reconciliation – Islam**
(Saber Seleman dr.s.seleman@hotmail.com, Azim Abromand, azim.abromand@gmail.com, Fazel Ghani Modjadedi fazlghanimogaddedi@yahoo.com)

17:15 - 19:00

Presentation of Afghan Organisations (three minutes for each and a poster session; for further information please contact Karim and Jonas Popal, info@kanzlei-popal.de)

Moderation: Reiner Braun, Karim Popal

Saturday Evening, October 12th

20:00 Cultural Event

Music by: Khalid Khalwat, Delagah Surood

Sunday, October 13th

9:30 - 10:30

Lectures:

Satar Sirat (Former Minister of Justice, Presidential Candidate 2004) (tbc): *Peace in Afghanistan – The Peace Plan for 2014*

Fazel Ghani Modjadedi (Afghan Peace Movement in USA): *Protests against the War in Afghanistan in the USA*

Matin Baraki (University of Marburg): *What can the International Civil Society/NGOs do for Supporting Peace and Development in Afghanistan?*

Moderation: Kristine Karch (German-Afghan Peace Network) / Saber Seleman

10:45 - 12:15

Continuation of Working Groups on Visions for a Peaceful, Participative, Sustainable and Democratic Future of Afghanistan

12:30 - 13:45

Our Voices for Afghanistan: Future Activities, Perspectives and Working Groups' Papers

Conveners of the working groups (main points, concrete ideas, proposals)

Moderation: Wahida Kabir, Lucas Wirl (INES)

13:45

Closing Remarks

Jeannick Lepretre (Mouvement de la Paix), Karim Popal

14:00 END

Organizational details:

Contact: No to War – No to NATO
c/o IALANA
Marienstrasse 19/20
10117 Berlin, Germany

Tel.: +49 30 206 54 857
Fax: +49 30 319 96 689

Registration: registration@afghanistanprotest.eu

Website: www.afghanistanprotest.eu

Fee: 20 Euro (reduced 5 Euro)

Conference Location: CIARUS, 7 rue Finkmatt, 6700 Strasbourg, France /
www.ciarus.com

Translation: Conference language is English. We aim at providing translation for Dari / Pashto, French and German. Translation in the working groups is not provided.

Cultural Event: We will ask for a fee of 5 Euro for the cultural event for persons not participating in the conference.

Information:

In May 2013 peace activists from Germany travelled to Kabul. Please find a travel report and pictures in English, German and French here:
www.afghanistanprotest.eu/afghanistan/

Donation needed:

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