

Excellencies,

Madam President, Honourable Judges, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to address this Assembly on behalf of the Coalition for the Prevention of Hazara Genocide, Afghanistan Organisation for Development of Human Rights, Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organisation and Afghanistan Transitional Justice Coordination Group. At the moment, millions of my people are suffering from atrocity crimes, such as genocide, persecution and other crimes against humanity and war crimes. This chaos is a direct result of decades violence and impunity.

The Taliban's return to the power in 2021, worsening the situation. The principles that guide this Court and the human society, such as human dignity, equality and justice, are violated every single day.

Women and girls have been erased from public life. They are banned from secondary school and university, barred from work, restricted in their movement, and stripped of their most basic rights. This is not isolated discrimination; it is a crime against humanity of gender persecution and as human rights advocates say it is also "gender apartheid." We welcome, the issuance of arrest warrants against the two Taliban leaders and emphasise for more.

Afghanistan's ethnic and religious minorities and marginalised groups, especially the Hazara community, have faced a pattern of targeted bombings, executions, forced displacement, and attacks on schools, mosques, and places of work. The nature and consistency of some of these atrocity crimes reflect clear indicators outlined in article 6 of the Rome Statute and the Genocide Convention and amount to genocide. These atrocities must be recognised, stopped, prevented and investigated with the full weight of the legal and ethical frameworks governing addressing, preventing and punishing genocide.

Across the country, civilians continue to suffer past and ongoing extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, torture, enforced disappearances, and the destruction of essential infrastructure. These acts, committed by the de facto authorities and various armed groups, constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. Impunity has emboldened perpetrators for over four decades. Victims deserve more than sympathy; they deserve

action grounded in international law that put their needs and wellbeing at the centre of any efforts.

Another urgent concern is the mass deportation of Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan and Iran. Women, children, human rights defenders and members of groups at risk of persecution are being forced back into conditions where their lives are at immediate risk. They need protection.

Excellencies,

The situations in Afghanistan and other countries show how much millions of people depend on the International Criminal Court for justice. We are deeply concerned about any policies or actions that threaten the Court or its officials. Millions of survivors, including my people, are watching this Assembly. The Court must be protected, and States Parties must act swiftly and decisively to defend its independence.

Furthermore, I urge this Assembly to:

1. Amend article 7 of the Rome Statute and codify “gender apartheid” as a new crime against humanity, and recognize the Taliban’s anti-women policies and actions as gender persecution and gender apartheid, and to fully cooperate with the OTP investigation and implementation of arrest warrants.
2. Recognize genocide committed against Hazaras and support investigations into this genocidal campaign against the Hazara community, and put measures in place to protect the community, and prevent and stop genocide.
3. Ensure continuity, independence and impartiality of the ICC by providing protection to the ICC as an institutions and to staff from sanctions.

Excellencies,

Despite immense suffering, the Afghan people have not abandoned hope. Afghan women continue to resist with extraordinary courage. Afghan youth continue to dream of a future built on rights and freedom. Human rights defenders continue their work at great personal risk.

If Afghan women — silenced, banned, and imprisoned — still find the strength to speak, then the international community has no excuse to remain silent. I ask this Assembly to let our collective voice today be a source of strength for those who cannot be here.

Thank you.