



Lecture Report

H.E., Dr Mohammad Ashraf Ghani

'Peacebuilding in Afghanistan'

Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies

H.E., Dr Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, on Tuesday 6 October 2020 delivered a lecture entitled 'Peacebuilding in Afghanistan' at the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies in Doha, Qatar.



In his lecture, H.E., Dr Mohammad Ashraf Ghani spoke about the meaning of peacebuilding and the importance of balancing between design, alignment, and implementation. He highlighted the cost of war - financial, infrastructural and human - on Afghanistan, which was followed with a positive message underlining the Afghan peoples' "national will for peace" moving forward. Focusing on the design element, he stated that a problem is presented so that

one could solve it. He sought to make the point that the victors of peace are the people of Afghanistan, making sure to underline that there are no winners in war.

The second point focused on the alignment of various people and institutions so as to avoid operating as part of a separate vision. To illustrate, he outlined that it is imperative to avoid the misallocation of resources and to align visions on the future of Afghan returnees in terms of ensuring that their livelihoods are met. Moving on to implementation, H.E., President Ghani spoke about time and the importance of implementing solutions for long-term peace in Afghanistan focused on regional connectivity, its citizens, and their great sense of equality.

He shed light on the nature of the Afghan conflict and clarified that it is not a civil war, but a regional war embedded in a global conflict, which is engulfed in the fifth wave of terrorism,



and that Afghanistan has never faced a separatist conflict. He also pointed out the importance of Afghanistan's geological, geographic, ecological and cultural capital, the role of Islamic belief in uniting Afghan society, and the culture of conflict resolution that is deeply entrenched in every linguistic community within the country. He emphasized the importance of moving forward, commitment, compassion, and courage in peacebuilding, and underlined that peace is not an elite's affair and that the Afghan citizen, particularly women and youth, must be at the centre of it. Nearing the end of his speech, he spoke of political succession and how the process falls under the fundamental will of the people. He concluded by stating that a ceasefire must be declared first, because that is the only way peace can be reached and that Afghans have the will, capital, capabilities, desire and readiness to do so.

The lecture was followed by a moderated discussion between H.E., Dr Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Professor Sultan Barakat, Director of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies. In their discussion they spoke about the main obstacles that hinder Afghanistan from tapping into its resources and potential, the important role the Loya Jirga plays as a forum for public debate that aims to make sure that peace is not an affair of the elites, and the kind of courage and compromise the state expects from the Taliban in order for both sides to engage and reach a political solution.



In a question-and-answer session with a live audience, questions were raised on topics including the role of Islam in Afghan society, the level of engagement and debate about peace on the ground, plans for transitional justice and the future procedures for the reintegration of Taliban, as well as the role and position of Afghan woman in society.



In response, H.E., Dr Mohammad Ashraf Ghani further noted that it is key for Afghans to move on from the past and embrace the future, and that although the reintegration process of the Taliban and the challenges the latter will

face might differ from one province to another, the Afghans are compassionate people, and they are ready to move forward. He asserted his optimism regarding the ongoing mediation and peace process, and the commitment of the state and government to succeed.