

Kvindernes Internationale Liga for Fred og Frihed

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom



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To
The Minister of Foreign Affairs Villy Søvndal
The Minister of Development Aid Christian Friis Bach
The Minister of Defence Nich Hækkerup

**The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on
Women, Peace and Security and the Danish effort in Afghanistan**

The Danish Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom request to the Danish government – as belligerent nation in Afghanistan and bound by the Danish national action plan for the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – under no conditions to accept peace negotiations in Afghanistan without a strong representation by the Afghan women at the negotiation table.

Likewise we request to the Danish Government to execute the recommendations from the Afghan women as they are expressed in the report from the Afghan Women's Network "UNSCR 1325 Implementation in Afghanistan" from October 2011 as well as in the "Afghan Women's Declaration" from the meeting in Bonn December the 5th 2011.

In 2005 Denmark composed – as the first country in the world – a national action plan for the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted on the 31st of October 2000. Since 2011 the Danish Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom has cooperated with women's peace organizations in Finland, Norway and Sweden to uncover how the Nordic countries have come up to the commitments made in each of their National Action Plans for UNSCR 1325 in connection to the invasion of Afghanistan. We refer to the research report "Norden in Afghanistan",
<http://www.fn1325.no/8156/8189NordicAfghanistan2001.pdf>

According to the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs Villy Søvndal Denmark will attempt to adhere to the progress which according to him has been in fields as women's rights, children's schooling and the health service, "It is decisive that we stick to fundamental red lines on which we will insist. First of all the fight for women's rights is crucial. However it is hard to say where it ends."

In contrast to a harder warfare in the first years of the Danish presence in Afghanistan the Danish role is now more focused on soft efforts such as training of the Afghan army and women's rights. After ten years with an Afghan government with support from the West, Afghanistan is still trying to introduce laws, which are oppressing women. "If we look at the development as for women's rights, every thing points to an exceeding of Sövnadal's red line. And what is left then to fight for?" Mikkel Vedby asks in an interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the daily Politiken the 13th of March this year.

The gravity of the situation is underlined i.a. by President Karzai's signing – after consultation with the Taleban – the 8th of March this year of a very restrictive code of conduct for women which according to the President himself is just following Islamic law. Women's rights activists in Afghanistan and in the rest of the world are considering these guidelines as a huge backlash as for women's rights.

At the conference "Women, peace and development in Afghanistan" in Eigtved's Pakhus the 27th of April this year the Minister of Development Aid Christian Friis Bach expressed in his welcome speech that "Denmark is ready to support the women," showing to UNSCR 1325.

The Overall Plan for Withdrawal of the Danish Troops from Afghanistan According to the Helmand Plan 2011-2012

In the Danish demands as for governance at the Kabul Conference in 2010 as it is briefly reported in the Helmand Plan there were *no* demands for Afghan women's participation in the decision making processes, neither in the range of Danish demands nor in any other of the occupying forces' demands.

The Overall Objectives in the Helmand Plan 2011-2012

1. No Danish combat troops in Afghanistan by the end of 2014.
2. Denmark wants to strengthen the capacity of the Afghan troops in order for them to take over the responsibility for the security in the country.
3. This is supposed to happen with increased training of the Afghan army and police.

Nowhere in the Helmand Plan description of the overall Danish objectives the women are mentioned.

The composition of the plan is based on a co-operation with NATO, UK and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

The Danish Civilian Effort as Described in the Helmand Plan 2011-2012

The civilian effort will be strengthened and it is underlined that the civilian effort has a much longer perspective than the military withdrawal (the Helmand-Plan p. 4). During 2012 the Danish combat troops will be reorganized to training groups and education groups in the advisory battalion.

The Danish civilian effort will focus at

1. Building of the state, including the constitutional state, the court of justice, police, prosecution and prison administration.

In this field Denmark wants to promote women's legal rights through more women in the police force. In the Danish operational field 16 women got an education as police officer before 2010.

2. Conditions of life

There are no specific promises to women in the plan, however it appears from the reporting about the Danish effort that women i.a. are included in the Danish micro loan arrangement. 80 percentage of the money goes to women.

3. Education

Denmark has i.a. contributed to the building of schools, including high schools, technical schools and a college of education. Furthermore people have been educated from the regional educational authorities. This has ensured a board of governors at every school.

Denmark has not demanded participation of women in the board of governors.

Not until the Helmand Plan is talking about the basic schools, girls are mentioned. However schools for girls have been built and more are to come.

In connection with the ensuring of education for girls the infrastructure has to be strengthened in order for the girls to be able to get higher-level courses. (However this kind of courses does not exist yet.)

In addition to that Denmark will increase the focus on capacity building of the Afghan civil administration in order to ensure that ownership for the process is established among the Afghans.

Human Rights

Not until the part of the text about human rights, women and women's rights are in focus, i.a. in the field of the penal code.

According to the Helmand-Plan 2011-2012 Denmark will at the overall level work at not reducing the conditions of the women compared to what has been accomplished since 2001. *The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom does not consider this goal sufficiently ambitious compared to the declarations of intent in the Danish National Action Plan for the UNSCR 1325.*

Listen to the Women: The Recommendations from the Afghan Women

From the "Objective in the Afghanistan Strategy 2008-2012" it appears that already in the Helmand-Plan 2010 an intermediate aim had been remarked, namely that "Denmark will follow the national action plan for the women of Afghanistan and the law about elimination of violence against women and support the process where it is necessary."

Afghan Women's Network (AWN) has on the 31st of October 2011 – supported by the EU in Kabul – presented their big report with suggestions for such an implementation of 1325 in Afghanistan, "UN SCR 1325 Implementation in Afghanistan". In the report they are going through the conditions for the women in the country from the invasion in 2001 to 2011 and are i.a. building on the result of AWN's contact to 500 women leaders, representing 500.000 women from more than 20 Afghan provinces. The report is concluded in 51 concrete recommendations addressed to six of the ministries in the Afghan government. This report offers an outstanding possibility to listen to the women and their recommendations and thereby even more target i.a. the Danish effort. For further information go to: <http://www.afghanwomennetwork.af/Latest%20Updates/1325%20English.pdf>

In connection with the international conference on Afghanistan in Bonn the 5th of December 2011 the AWN sent out a declaration, go to: www.afghanwomennetwork.af

In item two of the Preamble they say, "The Afghan women who participated in this consultation reaffirmed their support for the international community's long term engagement in Afghanistan and emphasized that Afghan women's achievements of the past 10 years should be promoted and strengthened through the commitments of Afghan government and the international community at the Bonn Conference."

In item four it is i.a. said, "Afghan women affirm that our future can and must evolve in a different Afghanistan from the past, in which our daughters and their daughters will be able to actively engage in peace building and nation building in an equitable environment."

Item six says i.a., "We, the women of Afghanistan, demand from our elected government a confirmation of its plans and commitments in protecting and promoting women's human rights."

As for the demands the women are making, they are listed under four categories:

- 1) Women & Good Governance

- 2) Women & Transition
- 3) Women & Peace and Reintegration
- 4) Women & the International Commitment to Afghanistan

As for item one they are focusing on strengthening “measures against the widespread corruption and embezzlement within the government system”, most of all because “This corruption is one of the main obstacles against women’s participation in leadership and decision making.” Furthermore they write, “Our experiences reveal that the lack of transparency and accountability in national flagship programs, and processes such as peace and integration, have obstructed our inclusion and participation in governance at the national and provincial levels.”

They are also complaining about the focus on the “political aspects of peace and transitions processes with little on governance reform and service delivery.”

Regarding item two the “Afghan women demand that women’s security become a measurable indicator of transition monitoring and evaluation.” They stress that their mobility has been impacted in some provinces, and “in some areas female governments employees have been threatened.” They “call for a systematic approach to consultation with women in communities and women groups before and during the transition process, to ensure our voices and perspectives are part of the implementation and monitoring of transition.”

They have an important point regarding rule of law and the justice system, “Afghan women firmly believe that a strong rule of law and accountable justice system will provide the best remedy for the increasing lack of trust among Afghan citizens and their government.”

As for item three they mention “peace and reconciliation as critical means to end violence and instability. A long lasting peace in Afghanistan requires national dialogue and national consensus building ...” Afghan women demand a 25 percentage quota on the High Peace Council and Provincial Peace Councils.

Item four is an appeal from the women “to the international community to strengthen and continue supporting women’s groups and civil society organizations during the transition process and beyond.”

Since women’s rights defenders and human rights activist are threatened in Afghanistan the Afghan women “call on the United Nations and International Human Rights Organizations to formulate emergency and long-term protection strategies to support Women’s Rights Defenders at risk.

Finally the Afghan women are appealing “to Islamic countries to promote improvement in Afghan women’s skills and expertise in Islamic law and jurisprudence in their development and diplomatic engagements in Afghanistan. These skills and qualifications are necessary for Afghan women to work in high level positions in the judiciary.”

On behalf of the Danish Section of Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

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