

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Majid Takht Ravanchi
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
On item 39: “the Situation in Afghanistan”
Before the United Nations General Assembly
New York, 10 December 2020

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Mr. President,

Afghanistan is at a critical juncture, and in order to build a better future for its citizens, it needs strong international support.

Today, we will vote in favor of the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, through which the Assembly sends a strong message of support to the people and Government of Afghanistan in their endeavor to build a more stable, prosperous and democratic country.

Only an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process can resolve the current conflict in Afghanistan. It must build upon and promote the past achievements, including the present Constitution, combatting terrorism as well as respecting the right of the people to self-determination through elections and the rights of religious and ethnic minorities and women.

From this perspective, we welcome the Assembly’s call for the preservation of Afghanistan’s Constitution and also its rejection of the restoration of the Islamic Emirate.

We commend the positive approach of Afghanistan’s Government in the peace talks. Taliban must also demonstrate the same level of determination and good faith, including through halting attacks against Afghanistan’s defense and security forces.

Moreover, all external actors must avoid interfering in peace talks which must be facilitated by the United Nations. In this context, we welcome the call by the Assembly for further engagement of the United Nations in the peace process.

Welcoming the progress made so far in the talks, we also stand ready, in coordination with the United Nations, to play a more active role to contribute to its success.

A durable peace in Afghanistan should not be imposed from outside, and the peace talks should not be expected to resolve decades-old problems overnight.

There is a need for flexibility and patience by all sides, placing the interests of the people of Afghanistan above all other interests including those of a specific group.

In a multi-ethnic and diverse society as Afghanistan, no single group, party or faction including the Taliban can claim to hold power by itself alone.

Despite the initiation of the peace talks, Afghanistan's security situation remains a source of concern, as attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including educational centers and diplomatic premises, are on the rise.

We strongly condemn all such attacks, most of which are perpetrated by terrorist groups, particularly Daesh, whose elements are still being transferred from Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan.

While the presence and activities of Daesh present a serious threat to the security of Afghanistan and the region, it is unfortunate that due to the objection of some Western countries, the inclusion of a standalone paragraph in the resolution on the threats emanating from Daesh in Afghanistan was not possible.

Our genuine support for the Assembly's resolution on the situation in Afghanistan must not be construed as an acknowledgement of, or support for, the continued presence or activities of foreign forces in that country.

However, while many countries stress that the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan must not lead to a security vacuum there, it is also regrettable that again due to the objection of some Western countries, a call for an orderly and responsible withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan was not included in the resolution.

A smooth and effective assumption of duties of foreign forces by defense and security forces of Afghanistan will be a positive step toward a sustainable peace, and accordingly, prior and simultaneous to the withdrawal of foreign forces, every effort should be made to support and strengthen Afghanistan's military and security forces.

Along with such efforts, effective assistance must be extended to Afghanistan in combating the illicit production of and trafficking in narcotic drugs as a source of financing terrorism and other crimes.

For our part, over the past 40 years, we have played an active role in combating drug trafficking in the region, in which, nearly 4,000 members of Iran's law enforcement forces have been martyred and over 12,000 others have been wounded.

Our outstanding activities in this regard have always been acknowledged at the global level. According to the UNODC's "World Drug Report 2020", Iran by far stands at the top of the list of countries that in 2018 seized the largest quantities of opiates, accounting for 53% of the global total.

The international community should not allow extremists, terrorists and drug traffickers to use the current economic situation in Afghanistan to promote their dangerous and heinous agenda, hence there is a need for sustained and increased international support for the economic development of Afghanistan.

In this context, in addition to hosting and supporting over 3 million Afghans including through the provision of health services during the pandemic and despite the savage U.S. economic war against our people, we have continued to promote economic cooperation with Afghanistan, one example of which is the provision of electricity to that country.

In order to help Afghanistan as a land-locked country to overcome the relevant difficulties, the development of the Chabahr Port has been on our agenda for the last couple of years.

Furthermore, just today we inaugurated the Khaf-Herat railway, which connects Afghanistan's railway to Europe through Iran.

All of these bilateral economic interactions are taking place under the illegal U.S. economic terrorism targeting Iranians and Afghans alike. Nevertheless, the Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to strengthen bilateral relations and support the fraternal people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

I thank you, Mr. President.