

**52<sup>nd</sup> regular session of the UN Human Rights Council****Item 2: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan****Oral statement delivered by Hafizullah Saeedi****On behalf of Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

Mr. President, Special Rapporteur,

Since the last Council session, human rights situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated even further: public executions, flogging, arbitrary arrests, and torture by the Taliban, are on the rise. Persecution of human rights defenders, civil society actors, and former government employees is alarming. Media censorship and repression of journalists continue to intensify.

Taliban has completed the erasure of women and girls from the society with policies and pronouncements that could only be described as gender apartheid. *Exclusion of women from public life has severe consequences throughout the country including for the delivery of much needed lifesaving aid and the work of NGOs.*

Meanwhile, the risk of genocide against Hazaras has escalated significantly *under the Taliban* while Tajiks and other ethnic groups are increasingly subjected to collective punishment.

*Hunger, forced evictions, forced marriages and recruitment of children into Taliban's armed units are widespread. Taliban continues to obstruct delivery of humanitarian aid especially in ethnic areas.*

As more Afghans seek protection *in and out of the country*, those already in exile *in neighbouring countries* are facing greater risk of deportation and visa obstruction. We call on all UN member states to provide safe passage and protection for all Afghan refugees and asylum seekers and respect the principle of non-refoulement.

Taliban have shown no willingness to respect Afghanistan's human rights obligations. The world cannot allow the grave crimes in Afghanistan be the new normal and move on. In this regard, we welcome the important work of the Special Rapporteur to draw attention to these crimes.

At the same time, we reiterate the urgency of a robust international accountability mechanism with *a mandate to establish the facts and circumstances relating to allegations of crimes under international law, and to collect, consolidate, preserve, and analyse evidence for future international justice as well as the resources, capacity, and mandate to account for the full extent and gravity of all violations and abuses in the country regardless of the perpetrator or when they were committed.*

We further call on the UN and Member States to take urgent steps towards establishment of an inclusive government in which all Afghans, in particular women, youth and all ethnic communities are well represented.

Thank you.