

October 19, 2021

The CAMCA Network Board of Directors, on behalf of the network at large, makes the following statement on the recent tragic events taking place in Afghanistan:

1. Acknowledging and celebrating Afghanistan's shared cultural and civilizational heritage with the Central Asia and Caucasus regions and Mongolia, we are extremely concerned about the welfare and well-being of the people of Afghanistan, especially in view of the recent and unprecedented political upheaval. The breakdown and failure of peace negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban, as well as the subsequent military takeover of the country by the Taliban and its close allies, has become a recipe for disaster not only for Afghanistan, but also for the wider region.

2. We, at the CAMCA Network, are especially worried about the consequences that may ensue as a result of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in terms of the country's future relations with the region and the rest of the world. Amidst the ongoing conflict and challenges wrought over the period of the past two decades, Afghanistan had been steadfast in recommencing its engagement with the world as a legitimate member of the international community. The unprecedented growth of educational opportunities for young men and women, the diverse cultural activities, the enhanced economic development, the freedom of media and the burgeoning civil society in Afghanistan all stood out as a testament to the strong belief of the Afghan people in progress and moderation. Afghanistan had increasingly connected to the Eurasian capitals, while commerce, trade, and connectivity were growing at a yet unwitnessed fast pace, feeding optimism about the continued enhancement of these ties as well as the shaping of the common civilizational identity in the region.

3. Moreover, we are extremely concerned about the increasing number of cases of grave human rights violations under the new Taliban regime, including severe restrictions placed on women's rights, including those to education and employment as well as the curtailing of media and civil society, which will altogether negatively affect liberty and pluralism in Afghanistan.

4. Furthermore, we take note of the severe humanitarian crisis unfolding in the country and urge international actors to support the people of Afghanistan and prevent a forthcoming humanitarian catastrophe. While the security concerns are serious in nature and must be addressed swiftly, we acknowledge that an urgent and focused action by the international community is required to mitigate the immediate risks of the deteriorating humanitarian situation.

5. We strongly urge the governments of the CAMCA countries to continue to maintain collective pressure in support of the people of Afghanistan, mobilize the regional and international community around a rights-based approach to Afghanistan, and stand with the aspirations of its people to live in a free, democratic, and pluralistic country. The respective diplomatic engagement of the partner states from the CAMCA region cannot and should not be towards inadvertently empowering the systematic discrimination and oppression of the people of Afghanistan.