

People's Perceptions on the Peace Process

Afghanistan



HEINRICH
BÖLL
STIFTUNG

Salah Consortium

March 2020



Introduction of the Implementing Organizations of the Survey

The survey was carried out with the financial support of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (Foundation). The survey's field activities were performed by the Salah Consortium across the country.

The responsibility for dissemination of the survey report was also given to Salah Consortium. After the press conference, the report will be disseminated and shared widely through media and social media networks.

SALAH is a consortium founded in 2013 by five organizations (NGOs) that felt the need to join forces in order to address peace, good governance and human security issues in Afghanistan during and after 2014 transition. Currently, Salah Consortium is consist of 6 Afghan civil society organizations including Afghan women's educational center (AWEC), Equality for Peace and Democracy (EPD), Cooperation for peace and unity (CPAU), Peace and training and Research organization (PTRO), Sanayee Development organization (SDO) and The Liaison office (TLO).

The primary purpose of the Consortium is empowering local capacities for peace, governance, research and development across the spectrum of civil society, including rural and urban (elder, mullah), media, etc. to gain a voice at the provincial and national level. Furthermore, the consortium is currently operating successfully in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

This survey report is authored by Mohammad Osman Tariq and reviewed by a technical review team that included, Mirwais Wardak, Dr. Mohammad Najib Azizi, Rahmatullah Amiri, and Mohammad Murtaza Haqeeqat.

Disclaimer: This publication was produced with the financial support of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the implementing organizations and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funding agency.

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	4
2. Barriers for the Peace Process and Afghan Youth Radicalization.....	7
2.1. Major Challenges and Barriers for Sustainable Peace.....	7
2.2. Major Reasons Youth Joining Armed Groups	12
3. Political Will.....	13
3.1. Public Confidence in the Government’s Political Will for Peace	14
3.2. Public Confidence in the Taliban’s Political Will for Peace	15
3.3. Results of Direct Peace Talks.....	18
3.4. Acceptance of Peace Accord by Taliban	19
4. Representation.....	20
4.1. Who Can Better Represent You in Peace Talks?	21
4.2. Role of Afghan Government in Peace Talks.....	22
5. Strategy and Contents	24
5.1. Proposed Contents for Peace Talks Agenda	24
5.2. What to Give Up for Peace?	25
5.3. Good Strategies to Bring Peace.....	27
5.4. Demand for Ceasefire	29
6. Key Actors/Stakeholders	31
6.1. What One Can do for Peace?	31
6.2. Expectations of Neighboring Countries	33
6.3. Expectations from the United Nations, International Community, and OIC.....	35
7. Methodology.....	37
Phase 1: Pre-field work activities/steps:	37
Phase 2: Activities/steps during the field work:	38
Phase 3: Post field work activities:.....	40
8. Concluding Remarks	41
9. Appendices.....	43
Appendix 01: Proposed Topics or Items for Peace Talks Agenda.....	43
Appendix 02: Planned and Actual Size by Province	47
Appendix 3: Composition of Regions	48
Appendix 4: Interview Questionnaire	48

1. Executive Summary

Both peace and conflict appear on our screens every day, but what do people actually think about peace and the current conflict in Afghanistan? With support from the Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBS), the Salah Consortium surveyed 6869 individuals in each of 34 provinces of the country about their perceptions of peace, conflict, and various related topics. The overarching aim of this study was to give ordinary Afghan citizens a voice regarding the current efforts led by the United States for a political settlement that will bring to an end the protracted conflict in Afghanistan. There were no significant high-level efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan between 2002—after the collapse of the Taliban regime—and the peace talks of the last two years (2018 and 2019), which have seen massive engagement of the government of Afghanistan, political elites, the United States, the European Union, other regional- and far-region countries, as well as the Taliban.

What are the challenges to sustainable peace? How do people perceive the political will for peace of the conflicting parties? What is the role of neighboring countries and the international community in the peace process? These are just a few of the key policy questions explored by this Peace Perceptions Survey. The results mesh closely with the focus of the current US-Taliban peace talks in Doha, as well as the upcoming intra-Afghan peace talks.

The peace perception survey was conducted between 15 December 2019 to 31 January 2020, and consisted of three phases. Phase one was the pre-field work activities, including the development of the questionnaire, training supervisors and field-testing the questionnaire, development of the data collection plan, and development of the database in *Excel*.

In phase two, the data was collected via face-to-face interviews selected by a random sampling method. The basis of the sample size was determined by the population of each province. At each sampling point, ten interviews were conducted. A joint team monitored five per cent of the interviews to allow prompt quality control of the research, to improve the surveyors' skills, and to ensure quality and transparent data collection based on a rigorous mechanism. This comprised 343 interviews in different sample areas across the country. The monitoring team also back checked 8 per cent of the surveys (511 interviews) across the country. During the back checking calls, more than four-fifths of respondents (82%) answered positively. Those who refused, or who said to the back checkers that they were not interviewed, represent less than one fifth (18%) and most of these respondents were from insecure areas.

Phase three of the project involved sending the completed questionnaires from all provinces (as scanned copies) to the data-entry team who logged all the responses. The research consultant cleaned and filtered the database—recommending that 421 interviews should be disregarded, from a total of 6869 interviews. The research results have therefore been analyzed based on these remaining 6448 interviews. The margin of error for this survey is ± 1.18 , with a level of confidence of 95 per cent (with a confidence interval of five per cent).

The Peace Perceptions Survey represents the views of 6448 respondents across all 34 Afghan provinces—from those in districts with active conflict to those in relatively peaceful urban and rural areas—about their views on peace and conflict.

The survey sought to answer questions around a number of different issues related to peace, and what people think about them. The survey has attempted to determine the barriers to sustainable peace, and why youths join armed groups. Survey respondents said that the major challenges and barriers that the peace process faces in Afghanistan are ISIS (Daesh) and neighboring countries (11%), followed by corruption and the lack of rule of law (9%); the presence of foreign forces, poor provincial administration, and poverty (8%); foreign terrorist groups and the drugs mafia (7%). In total, obstacles and challenges relating to poor governance represent more than half (55%) of these barriers. Economic reasons represent the main causes (28%) of youth joining armed groups, in particular the Taliban.

We also asked Afghans about their perceptions of the political will for peace, including public confidence in the government and the Taliban for peace, and the confidence people have that a peace accord will be accepted by the Taliban in its entirety. More than three-quarters (79%) said that they are “very confident” or “somewhat confident” that the government has the political will to bring peace, while respondents’ confidence in the Taliban’s political will for making peace is at 63 per cent. There are large regional variations in their confidence that the Taliban has the political will for making peace: the highest is reported in the Southwest (81%), followed by three-quarters (75%) in the East. Similarly, 86 per cent of respondents in the Southwest stated that they are confident that the direct peace talks between the government and Taliban will result in peace. The Southeast (83%) and East (80%) regions also had high confidence in the peace talks, above the average for all regions (75%). The Northwest region, meanwhile, reported the greatest *lack* of confidence that direct peace talks between the government and Taliban will result in peace, with 36 per cent of respondents expressing that they are either “not confident” or that they do not know.

The survey raised the issue of representation in peace talks with direct questions of *who would best represent you in peace talks* and *what do you see the role of the state in peace talks?*

Nearly two-fifths (39%) said the state would represent their interests in the peace talks most effectively, followed by victims’ representatives¹ (15%), and civil society (13%). One in ten respondents said women would effectively represent their interests in peace talks, whilst one in eleven reported that their interests would be best represented by political parties/groups (9%). One in fourteen respondents stated that their interests would be represented effectively by religious leaders/tribal elders, and youth representatives (both at 7%). Similarly, nearly two-thirds of respondents (61%) said that the role of government in peace talks is either very important (49%) or important (12%), leaving less than one-third (32%) reporting that the role of government is *not* important in peace talks with the Taliban.

The survey asked people what strategy they thought the peace talks should take and what their content should be, asking for specific proposals for the agenda of the peace talks. We

¹ Families who have lost family members in the Afghan war

also asked people what they would be willing to give up for peace. Considering the prominence of a ceasefire in the national discourse, we asked respondents whether they wish to have a ceasefire in the future; the overwhelming majority (93%) said they would like one. Lastly, concerning the actors in the peace process, respondents have given specific recommendations to various groups, including individual Afghan civilians, neighboring countries, and the international community.

To give a flavor of the issues suggested for inclusion on the agenda for peace talks—which was asked as an open question—the following gives the top ten responses from the survey:

1. Ceasefire & end of war
2. Women's rights
3. Sustainable peace
4. Value people's demands & recommendations
5. Establishment of security
6. The Government & Taliban's commitment for successful talks
7. Discuss major points of the country's development strategy
8. Release of prisoners
9. Regional economic activities & Afghanistan participation
10. The Constitution

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to give to ordinary Afghans a voice in the peace process. The survey is part of these efforts: it will not only be used as a tool for the peace process and to provide contents for peace talks, but it will also further efforts to encourage Afghans to contribute to, and be active in, bringing peace to the country. While the peace process is currently driven by foreigners and the Afghan political elite, responses to the survey show that people perceive a more prominent role for civil society, tribal elders, and other members of society.

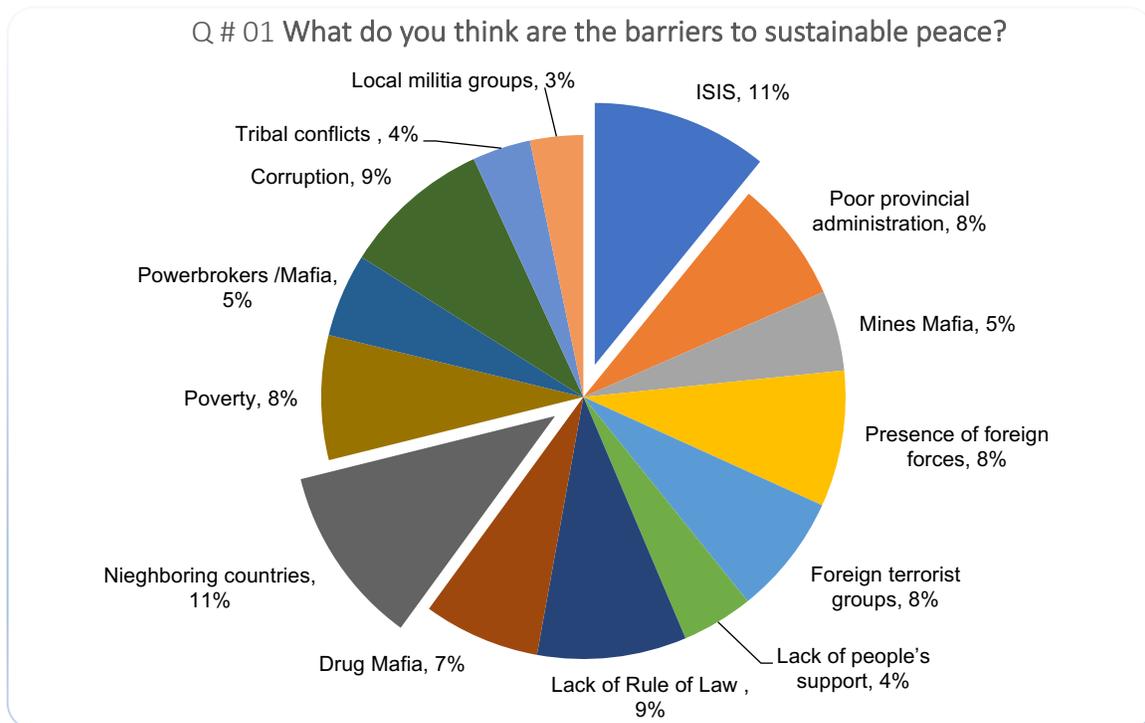
The study reveals that ordinary Afghans perceive economic problems and a lack of jobs as major reasons for youths joining armed groups, and that ideology serves as only a minor factor. People also feel that the conflict in Afghanistan has local-, regional-, and international dimensions; people are, however, eager to contribute directly towards the promotion of peace at the grassroots level. This demonstrates that people do not feel helpless, and consider a role for themselves in building a sustainable peace. According to the survey results, women's rights is a top issue to be included in the peace agenda, and when it comes to representation, the role of the state is prominent in responses. Furthermore, people believe that victims' families and civil society are other groups that represent them. It is also important to note that the majority of respondents are not keen to give up the achievements of the last 18 years.

2. Barriers for the Peace Process and Afghan Youth Radicalization

The Afghan peace process is going slower than many Afghans expected after the first round of negotiations started between the US and Taliban in Doha in 2018. In this survey the Afghan public was asked what they thought were the major challenges hindering the peace process. Respondents were asked both about the major challenges for the peace process, and the consistent ability of armed opposition groups to recruit the Afghan youth. This section of the survey is divided into two sub-sections, seeking to understand the public perception of the major obstacles facing the peace process, and the reasons Afghan youth join opposition armed forces. The major general challenges are further divided into two groups: the first group examines external challenges and barriers, and the second looks at internal challenges and barriers.

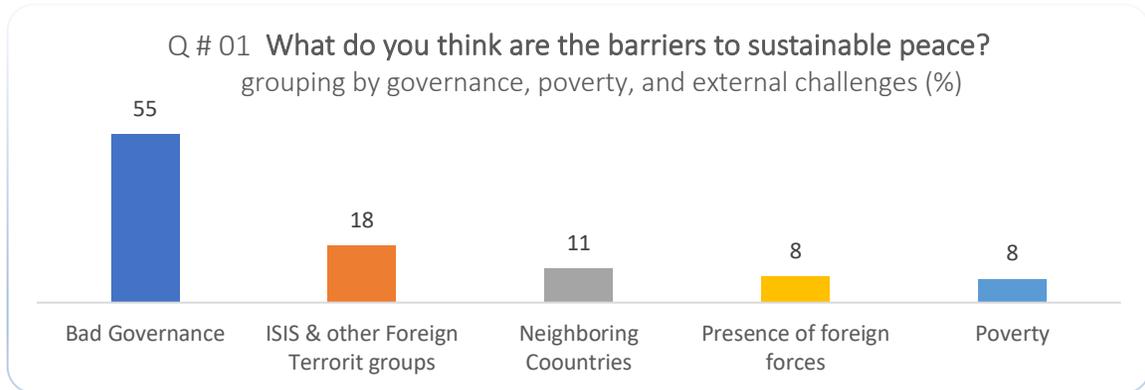
2.1. Major Challenges and Barriers for Sustainable Peace

When asked what major barriers hinder a sustainable peace in the country, one out of nine of respondents answered ISIS (Daesh) and neighboring countries (11%), followed by corruption, and the lack of rule of law (9%), the presence of foreign forces, poor provincial administration, and poverty (8%), foreign terrorist groups and the drug mafia (7%). Mine-mafias and power-brokers/mafia (5%), lack of popular support, and tribal conflicts (4%) and local militia (3%) garnered the lowest votes as major barriers for a sustainable peace in the country.

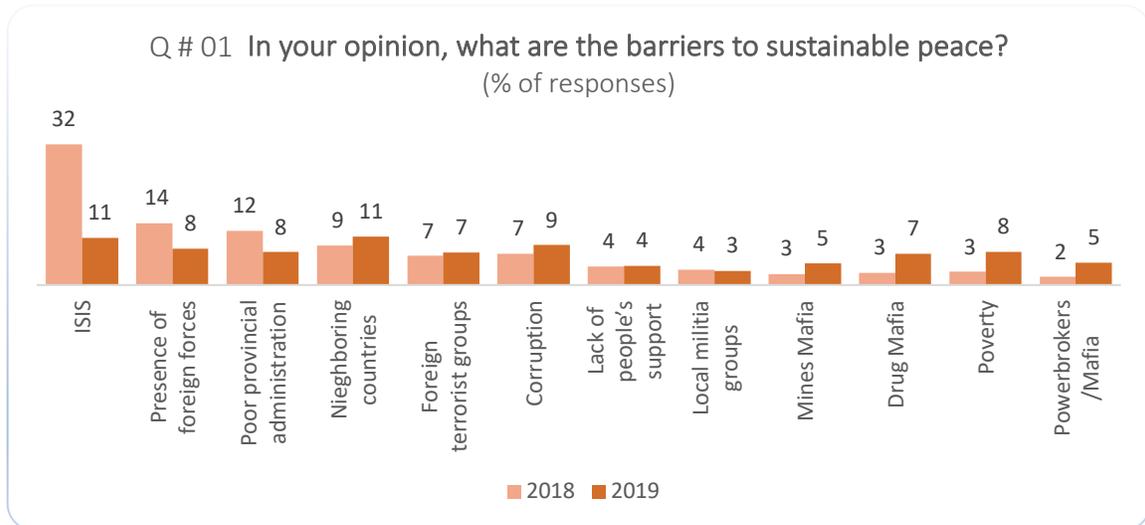


Combining the challenges that relate to governance as a super-group, these represent the primary challenge faced by the peace process, reported by more than half (55%) of

respondents. *ISIS plus foreign terrorist groups*, meanwhile, were reported by nearly a fifth (18%) of the respondents, representing the second greatest challenge. This is followed by *neighboring countries* (11%) ranking as the third main challenge. *Poverty* and *the presence of foreign forces* then ranked fourth, with each of them garnering eight per cent of responses as a challenge facing the peace process in Afghanistan.

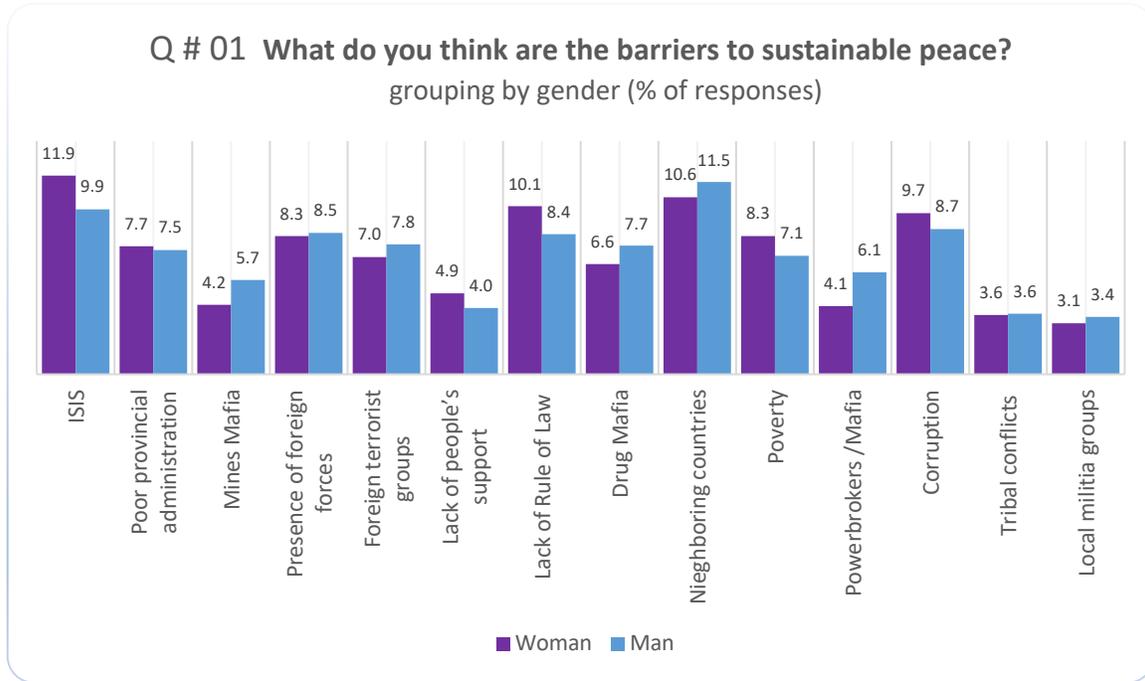


The Salah Consortium conducted a similar perception survey in 2018 in which the same question was asked. Comparing the responses from the 2018 and 2019 surveys, we see that the role ISIS plays as a major challenge for peace has changed the most, dropping from 32 per cent in 2018 to 11 per cent in 2019. The presence of foreign forces has dropped from 14 per cent in 2018 to 9 per cent in 2019, and poor provincial administration from 12 per cent in 2018 to eight per cent in 2019. Meanwhile, the role of neighboring countries has increased from nine per cent in 2018 to 11 percent in 2019, now ranking it equal to ISIS as the primary barrier (11%). The remaining challenges and barriers have doubled or at least increased. The significant drop in the public’s perception of ISIS as a major threat to peace could be related to the recent military defeat of the group — that it is not seen as a significant military force anymore.



Gender groups report no major differences in relation to how they perceive these challenges and barriers. The greatest gap between the two groups occurs with females ranking the following threats higher than men: ISIS (12% female versus 10% of male

respondents); lack of rule of law (10% female versus 8% male); and corruption (10% female versus 9% male). However, male respondents are more concerned than female respondents about the role of neighboring countries as a major challenge to the peace process (12% males to 11% female).



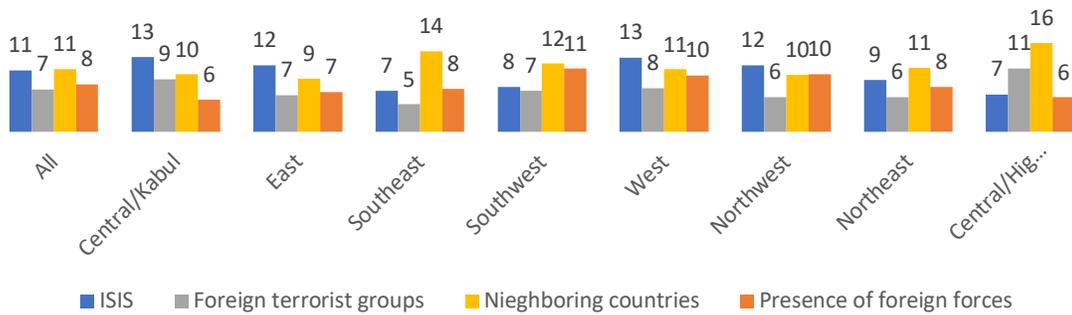
In the following paragraphs, these major challenges are further divided into two groups looking at the regional differences of the survey’s results. The first group examines external challenges that include ISIS (*Daesh*), foreign terrorist groups, neighboring countries, and the presence of foreign forces. ISIS and neighboring countries were the two categories that emerged primarily, receiving varied responses in different regions.

In four regions—namely Central/Kabul, East, West, and Northwest regions—ISIS is reported higher (13%, 12%, 13%, and 12%, respectively) than neighboring countries (10%, 9% 11%, and 10%, respectively). In the other four regions—Central/Highland, Southeast, Southwest, and Northeast—the converse applies, with neighboring countries representing a greater threat to the peace process than ISIS (16% vs. 7%, 14% vs. 7%, 12% vs. 8%, and 11% vs. 9%, respectively). It is obvious that the regions with the highest presence of ISIS reported the group as the major challenge, while other regions that have not been targeted by ISIS reported neighboring countries as their top barrier to sustainable peace.

The presence of foreign forces as an external challenge received a higher than average number of responses in Southwest (11%), West, and Northwest (10%), though on the national level it ranked third as an external barrier to sustainable peace, at eight per cent. The existence of foreign terrorist groups is higher than the national level (where it represents 7% of respondents) in three regions: Central/Kabul, Central/Highlands, and the Western regions, while it is equal in two others, and lower in the remaining regions.

Q # 01 What do you think are the barriers to sustainable peace?

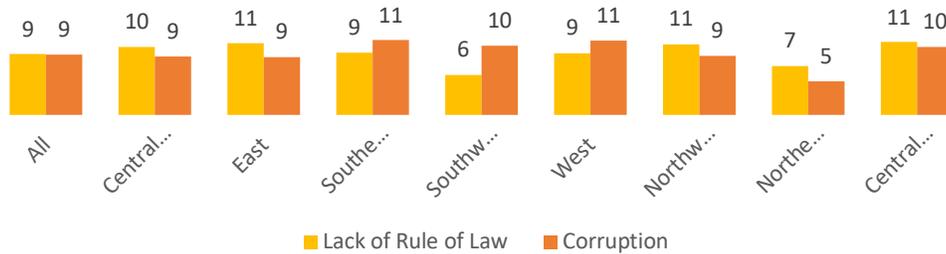
External challenges, grouping by region (% of responses)



The four major challenges described above are considered *external* challenges that hinder the peace process. The respondents also identified other major barriers that have an *internal* nature, and are directly related to bad governance. The lack of rule of law and corruption feature most predominantly. These two challenges were both reported by one in 11 respondents (9%). The lack of rule of law ranked as the greatest internal barrier in five regions, while in the other three, corruption ranked higher.

Q # 01 What do you think are the barriers to sustainable peace?

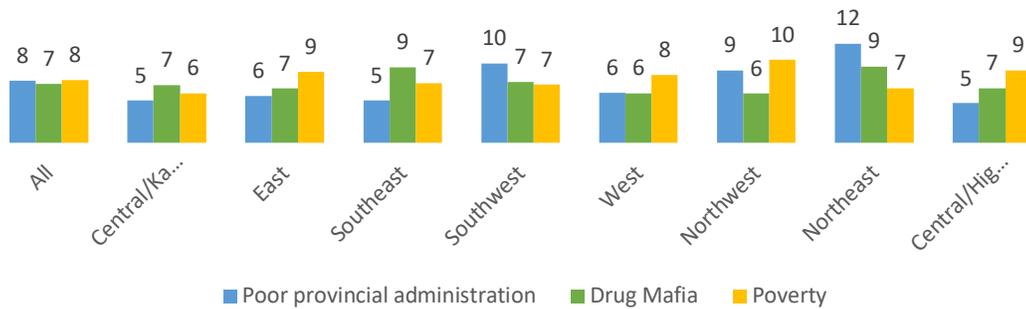
Internal challenges [i], grouping by region (% of responses)



Following the lack of rule of law and corruption, it is poor provincial administration, poverty, and the drugs mafia that rank as the next tier of challenges and barriers to sustainable peace in Afghanistan. Poor provincial administration is the leading challenge in Northeast (12%) and Southwest (10%), while the drugs mafia leads in Central/Kabul (7%) and Southwest (9%). In the remaining four regions, poverty is reported as the primary internal barrier facing the peace process.

Q # 01 What do you think are the barriers to sustainable peace?

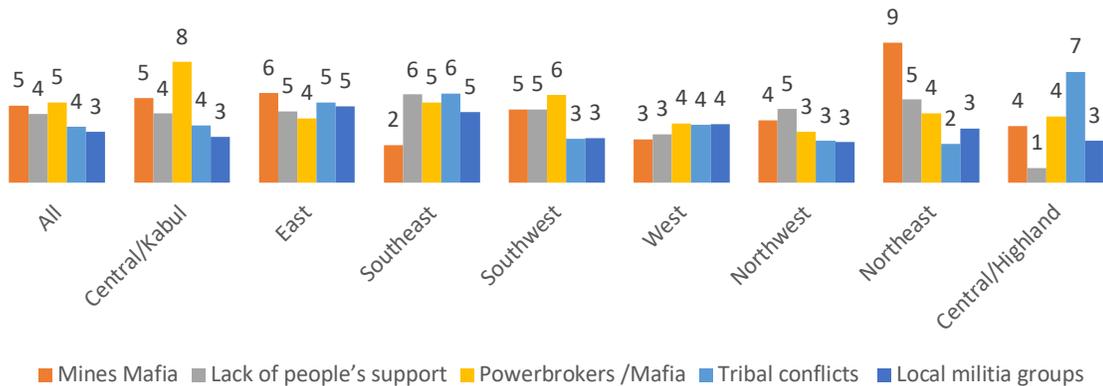
Internal challenges [ii], grouping by region (% of responses)



The mines mafia, a lack of popular support, and the role of powerbrokers/mafia were the next three challenges reported by respondents. At the national level, these three challenges come in largely as the fifth-highest internal challenge, but the frequency of respondents citing them varied significantly across the regions. Amongst this tier of internal challenges, the mines mafia is considered the primary barrier for the ongoing peace process in Northeast (9%) and East (6%) regions. Lack of popular support was the highest in Northwest (5%), while power brokers/mafia is the highest in Central/Kabul (8%) and Southwest (6%). The tribal conflict is reported highest among these five challenges in Central/Highland (7%).

Q # 01 What do you think are the barriers to sustainable peace?

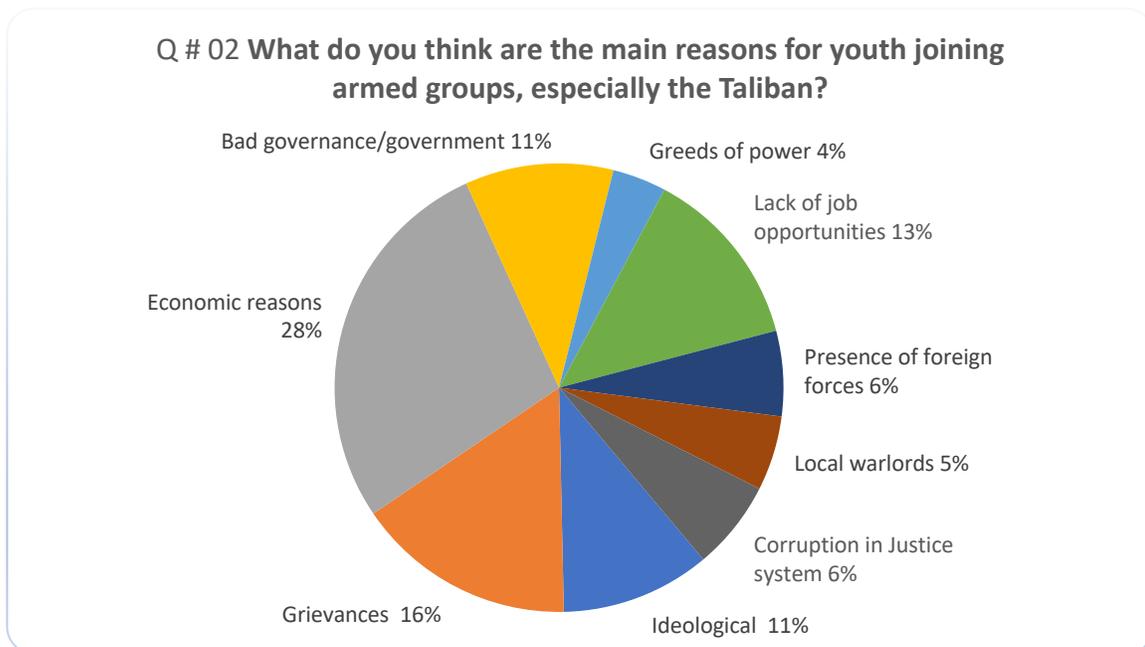
Internal challenges [iii], grouping by region (% of responses)



Having explored how our respondents defined the major challenges and barriers facing the Afghan peace process, we will now explore their views on the reasons and vulnerabilities that lead to Afghan youths joining armed opposition groups, including the Taliban.

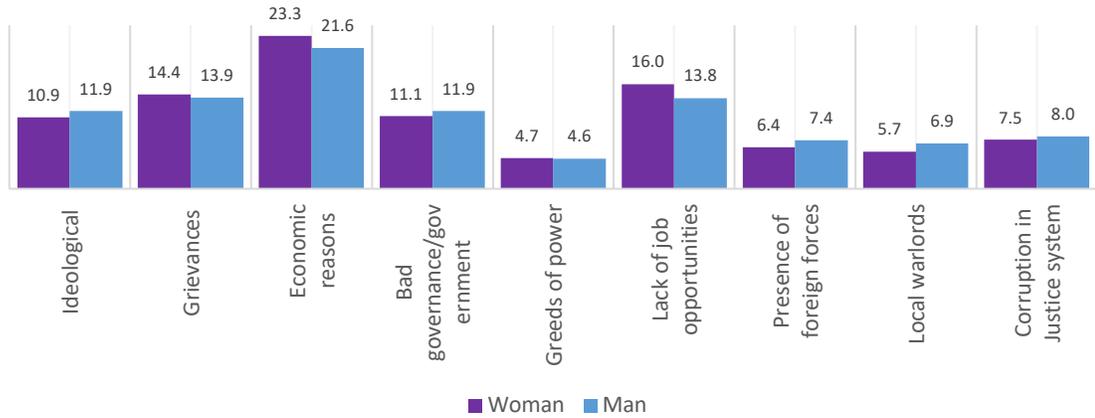
2.2. Major Reasons Youth Joining Armed Groups

When respondents were asked their opinion about why Afghan youths join armed groups, in particular the Taliban, by far the most popular answer was economic reasons: more than two-fifths (41%) of the total responses to the survey are accounted for by combining *economic reasons* (28%) and a *lack of job opportunities* (13%). Grievances accounted for just over a quarter of responses, split between *grievances in general* (16%, the second most popular answer) and *grievances with poor governance* (11%). Other respondents reported *ideological reasons* (11%), *corruption in the justice system* and *presence of foreign forces* (6%), *local warlords* (5%) and *greed of power* (4%) as the main reasons for youth joining the armed opposition groups.



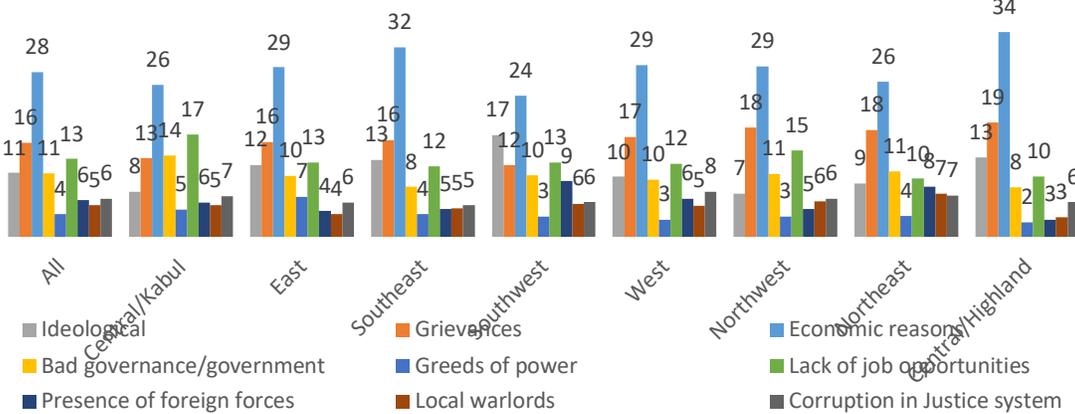
There are no significant differences when comparing the responses split by gender.

Q # 02 What do you think are the main reasons for youth joining armed groups, especially the Taliban? (% of responses)



There are, however, regional differences in the responses to why youths join armed opposition groups. Though the lack of job opportunities is closely related to economic reasons, the respondents have reported it separately, perhaps because of the level of importance it has to them. Combining the *economic reasons* and *lack of job opportunities* makes this the most important factor, given by more than two-fifths of all respondents in nearly every region: Central/Kabul (43%), East (42%), Southeast (44%), West (41%), Northwest (44%) and Central/Highland (44%). We see slightly lower levels in Southwest (37%) and Northeast (36%), although it still represents more than a third of responses.

Q # 02 What do you think are the main reasons for youth joining armed groups, especially the Taliban? (grouping by region, % of responses)



3. Political Will

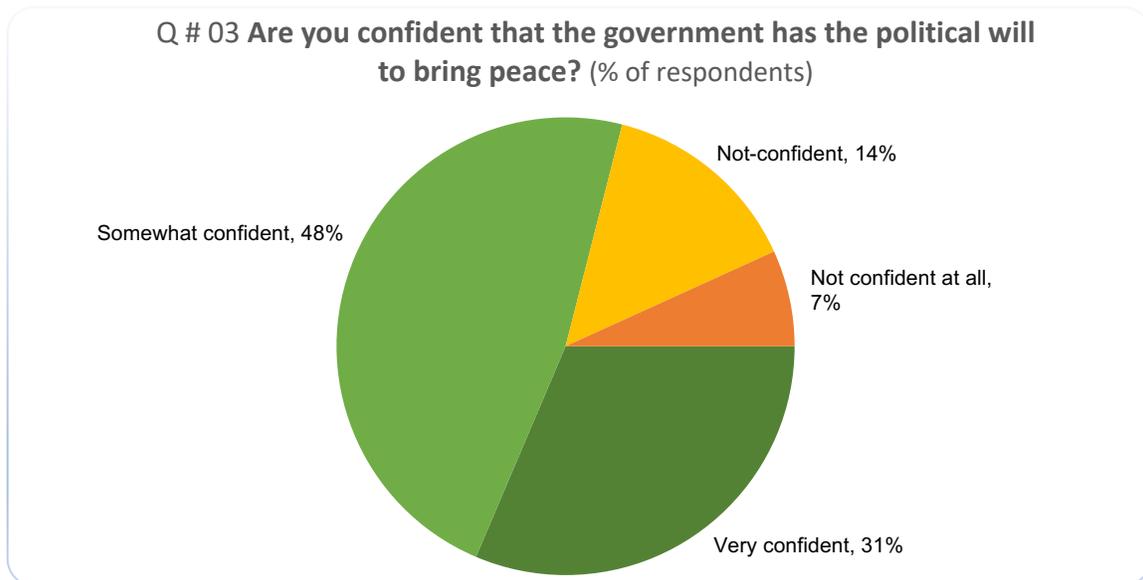
One of the main questions that resonates amongst the general public in Afghanistan is related to the current peace process, and the political will of the Afghan government and the Taliban towards it. The respondents in this survey were asked how they perceive the two sides, relating to their honesty and whether they have the political will to reach a peace deal. This section of the report examines the opinions of respondents relating not only to

the two sides' political will for peace, but also respondents' confidence that the peace talks will result in a peace deal that is acceptable to the different Taliban groups, particularly those who control the armed foot soldiers.

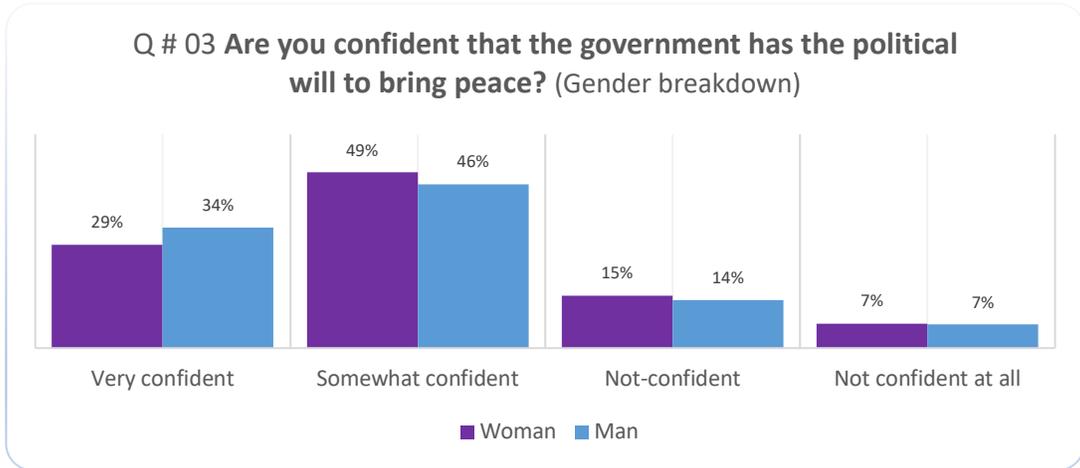
Considering all of the barriers that featured in survey answers, the respondents were positive when answering questions about the political will of both the Afghan government and the Taliban to reach a peace deal.

3.1. Public Confidence in the Government's Political Will for Peace

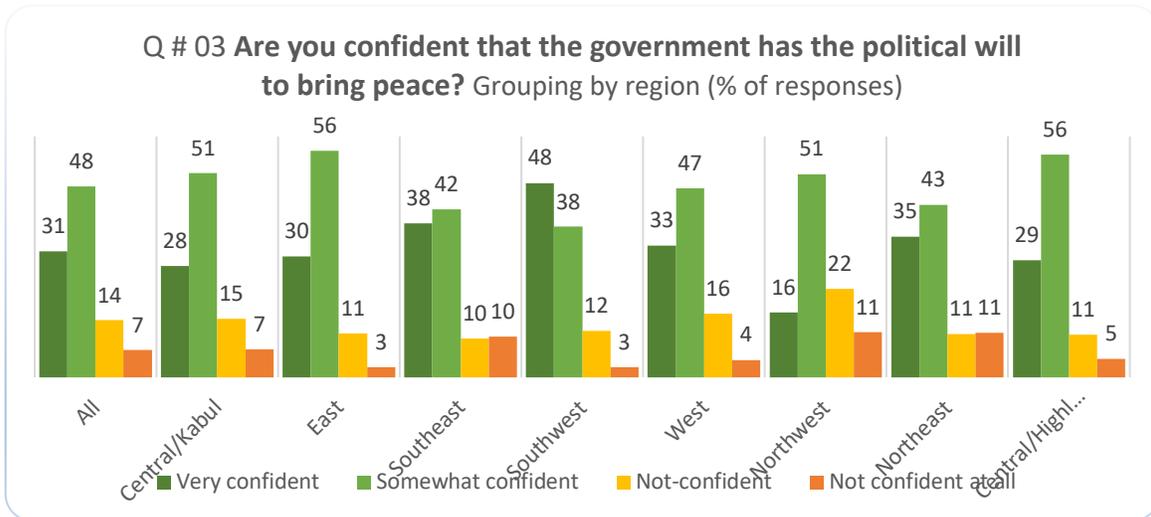
More than three quarters of all respondents (79%) expressed confidence in the government's political will to reach a peace deal with the Taliban: 31 per cent were "very confident", and 48 per cent were "somewhat confident". This leaves just over a fifth of respondents who are not confident that the government has the political will to bring peace.



There is slight difference between the level of confidence of male respondents (80%) and female respondents (78%) in their faith in the government's political will for making peace.



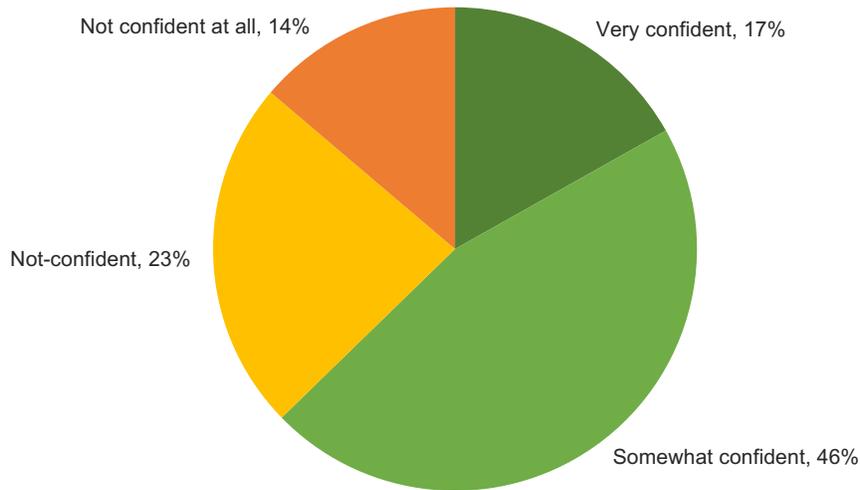
The respondents' level of confidence in the government's will for peace varies from one region to another. Dividing the answers into those expressing confidence and those expressing no confidence, we see that the highest levels of confidence were reported in the East and Southwest regions (86%), and Central/Highland (85%), whilst the Northwest region expressed the lowest level of confidence (67%). This shows a variation of nearly 20% between the highest and the lowest levels of confidence in the government's political will to bring peace.



3.2. Public Confidence in the Taliban's Political Will for Peace

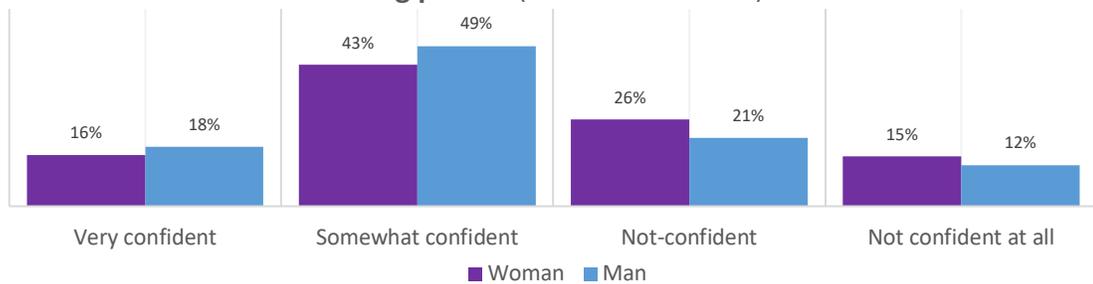
The respondents were also asked about their perception of the Taliban's political will towards the current peace process. Nearly two-thirds of people said they have some level of confidence in the Taliban's political will to reach a peace deal (63%, "very confident" and "somewhat confident" combined). This represents a level of confidence 23% lower than that of the government's will for peace. According to the responses, 38 per cent of people are either *not confident* or *not confident at all* that Taliban have the political will to bring peace to the country.

Q # 05 Are you confident that the Taliban have the political will to bring peace?



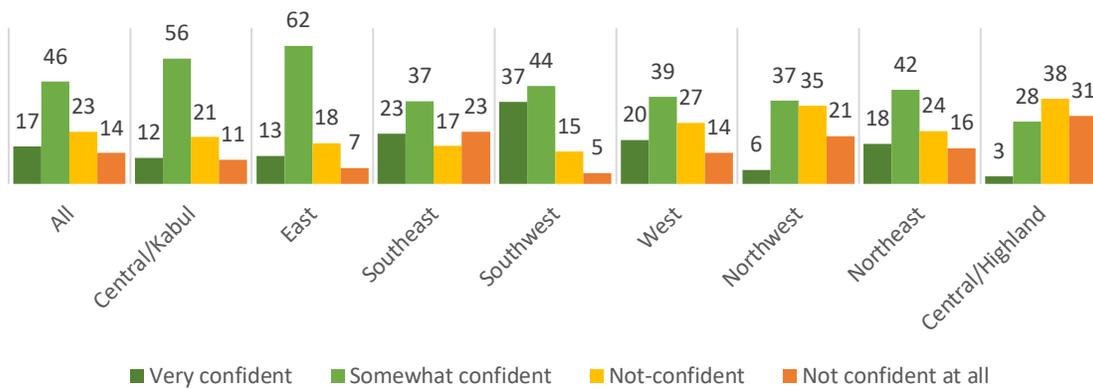
There is a significant variation between the two genders regarding the Taliban’s political will for peace, with women showing less confidence than men. Just under three-fifths (59%) of female respondents are confident versus more than two-thirds (67%) of male respondents.

Q # 05 Are you confident that the Taliban has the political will to bring peace? (Gender breakdown)



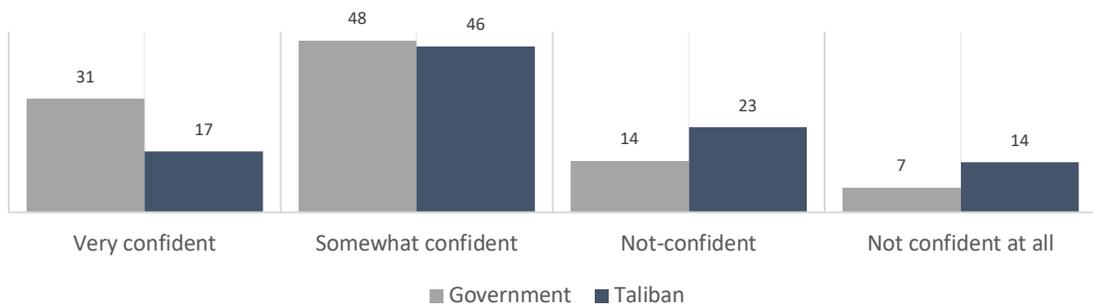
Different regions also have significantly different levels of confidence in the Taliban’s political will for peace. The highest confidence was reported in the Southwest (81%), followed by three quarters in the Eastern region (75%). While the lowest confidence in the Taliban’s political will to bring peace was recorded in the Central/Highland (31%) and Northwest (43%) regions.

Q # 05 Are you confident that the Taliban has the political will to bring peace? Grouping by region (% of responses)



The following figure shows the difference in confidence that respondents have in the political will of the government and the Taliban to bring peace. The government receives a significantly higher proportion of confidence than the Taliban (79% vs 63%, respectively) when looking at **overall** levels of confidence, irrespective of the degree of confidence.

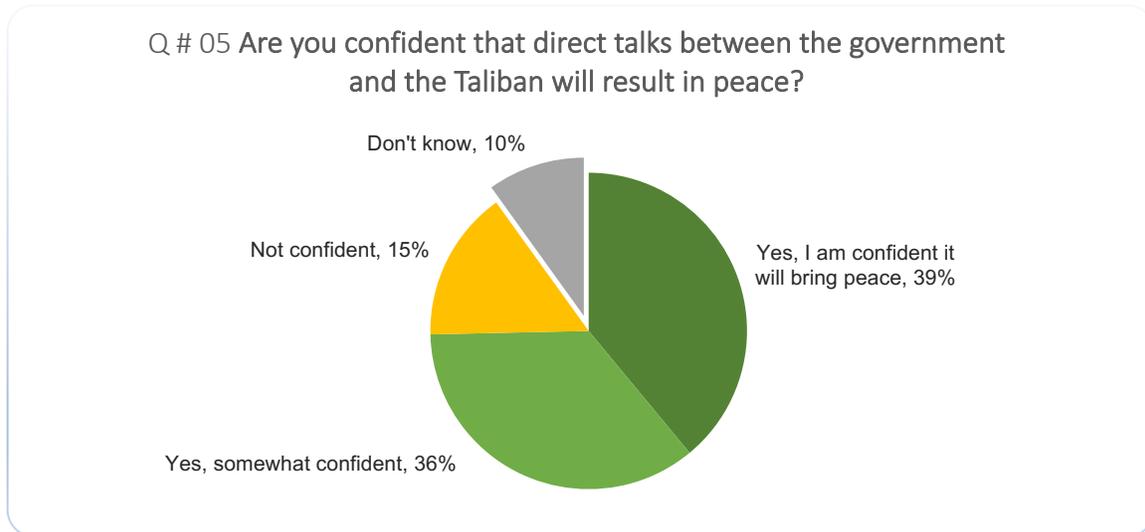
Q # 03 & 04 Confidence in the political will to bring peace Comparison by actor (% of responses)



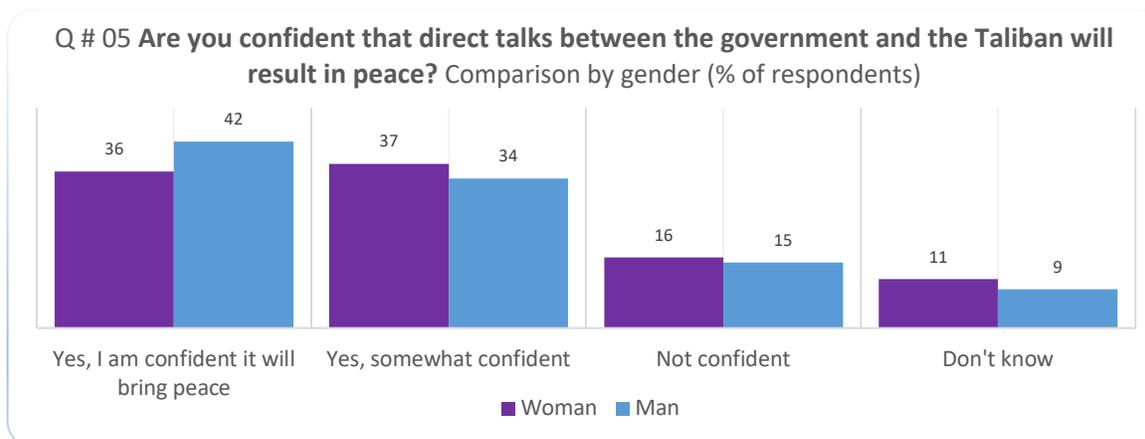
The greater level of confidence in the political will for peace of both the Afghan government and the Taliban shows that Afghans have attached high hopes to the ongoing peace process. The reasons for the somewhat lower confidence in the Taliban might emanate from their consistent denial to talk to Afghan government representatives. Sooner or later, direct peace negotiations will start between the government and Taliban and this might change this perception — probably on both sides, depending on how the negotiations go. We therefore asked the respondents in this survey to indicate their level of confidence that the direct peace talks would result in peace.

3.3. Results of Direct Peace Talks

We asked respondents how confident they felt that direct peace talks between the government and the Taliban would result in a peace deal. Three-quarters of respondents (75%) reported they are *confident* or *somewhat confident* that direct talks would result in peace. One out of seven respondents (15%) said they are not confident that direct talks will bring peace, and the remaining ten per cent said that they don't know.

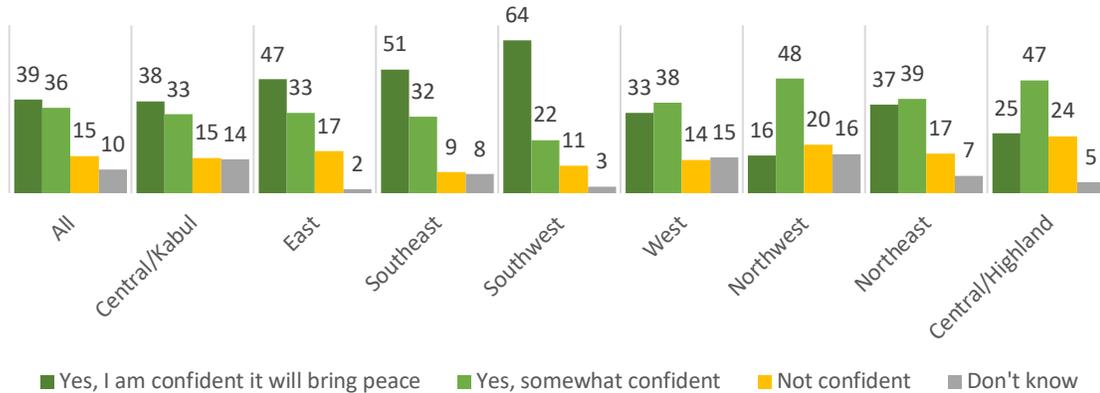


There was no significant difference reported in responses to this question based on the gender of respondents. Male respondents were three per cent more confident than female respondents that direct peace talks will result in a peace deal (76% vs. 73%, respectively).



There are significantly different responses to this question based on the regions, however. More than four-fifths (86%) of respondents in Southwest said that they are confident that direct peace talks between the government and Taliban will result in peace. This is followed by Southeast (83%) and East (80%) regions. The Northwest region reported the lowest level of confidence, with more than a third saying they were “not confident” (36%) that direct peace talks between the government and Taliban would result in peace.

Q # 05 Are you confident that direct talks between the government and the Taliban will result in peace? Grouping by region (% of responses)

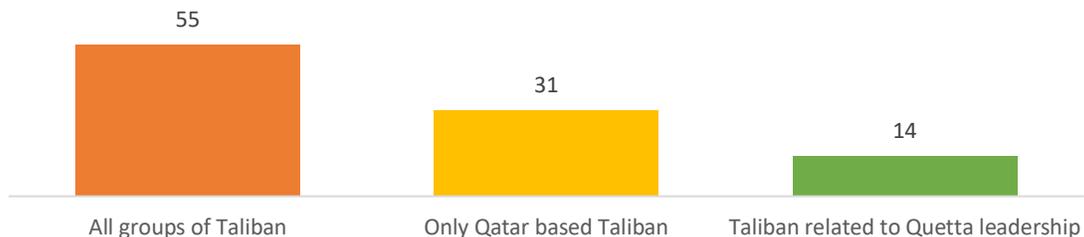


3.4. Acceptance of Peace Accord by Taliban

Some people, particularly from the side of the Afghan government and other political analysts, believe that there are differences amongst the Taliban leadership regarding a potential peace deal. They claim that a peace deal signed by the Taliban political office in Doha may not be accepted by Taliban commanders, who are possibly looking for a military defeat of the Afghan government following the withdrawal of US forces. We therefore asked respondents whether they believe that a potential peace deal with the Taliban would be acceptable to all Taliban groups.

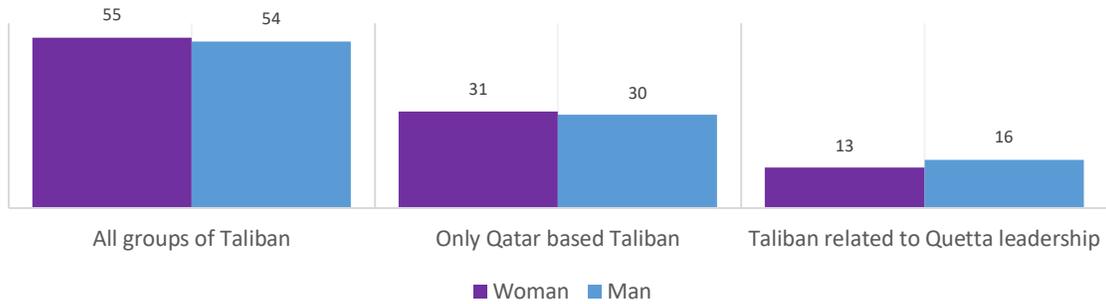
More than half of respondents (55%) said that they believe that all Taliban groups would accept the agreement, while just less than a third (31%) said that only the Qatar-based Taliban would accept the peace deal. One in seven respondents (14%) said they believed that the agreement would only be accepted by the Taliban under the Quetta leadership.

Q # 06 If Taliban leaders sign a peace agreement, do you think it will be accepted and welcomed by all Taliban groups? (% of respondents)



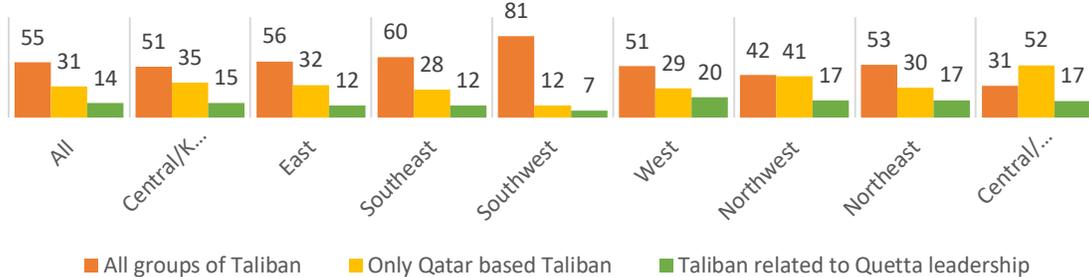
There are only minor variations reported by gender groups. Slightly more women said that they believed that all groups of the Taliban would accept the agreement (55% female to 54% male).

Q # 06 If Taliban leaders sign a peace agreement, do you think it will be accepted by all Taliban groups? Comparison by gender (% of respondents)



The regional variance in the responses to this question are significant, however. More than four-fifths (81%) of respondents in Southwest believe that all groups of the Taliban would accept the peace agreement. This level of confidence is followed by Southeast (60%). Respondents in Central/Highland are more pessimistic, with only 31 per cent saying they believe that all groups of Taliban would accept the agreement; more than half (52%) of respondents here believe that the acceptance of the peace agreement would be limited to the Doha-based Taliban group. Respondents in the Northwest region are equally divided: 42 per cent think that all groups would accept the peace deal, and 41 per cent believe that acceptance would be limited to the Doha-based group.

Q # 06 If Taliban leaders sign a peace agreement, do you think it will be accepted by all Taliban groups? Grouping by region (% of respondents)



4. Representation

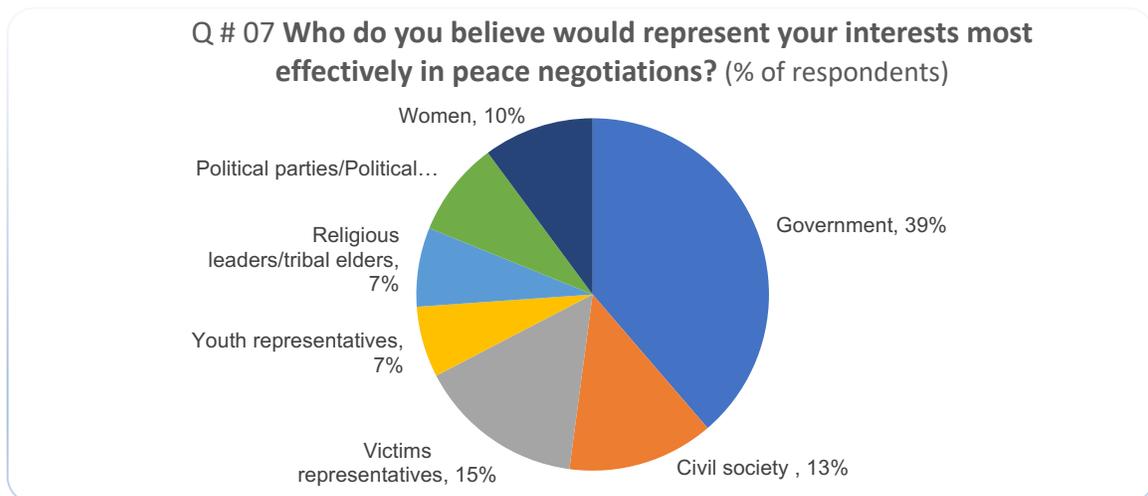
Representation in peace talks is not only a public concern on the Taliban side — whether field commanders will abide by what is decided by their Doha office representatives. There are also growing concerns regarding the government side. The division between the government and other political parties in Kabul, and their inability to agree on a representative team to talk to the Taliban, is what many believe will close this window of opportunity for a negotiated peace deal. The survey therefore asked the Afghan public

about who they believe could best represent them in the potential Taliban and Afghan government negotiations.

We first tried to understand public opinion on who would best represent them, and secondly surveyed the perception of the importance of the government's role in the peace talks.

4.1. Who Can Better Represent You in Peace Talks?

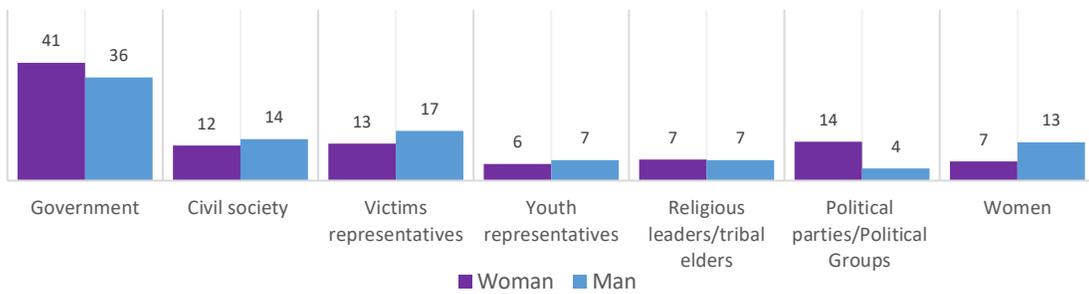
Respondents were asked who would better represent their interests in the peace talks. Around two-fifths said the state would effectively represent their interests (39%), followed by representatives of war victims (15%), and civil society (13%). One in ten said women (10%) would represent their interests effectively in peace talks, while nine per cent said that their interests would be best represented by political parties/groups. One in fourteen respondents said that their interests would be represented effectively by religious leaders/tribal elders (7%), and youth representatives (7%).



Examining these responses by gender reveals that just over a third of male respondents want to be represented by the state in peace talks (36%), while the figure is five per cent higher for female respondents (41%). Representatives of war victims rated higher amongst men (17%) than women (13%). Civil society was chosen by 14 per cent of male respondents versus 12 per cent of females; and youth representatives came in at almost the same level of responses (7% male versus 6% female).

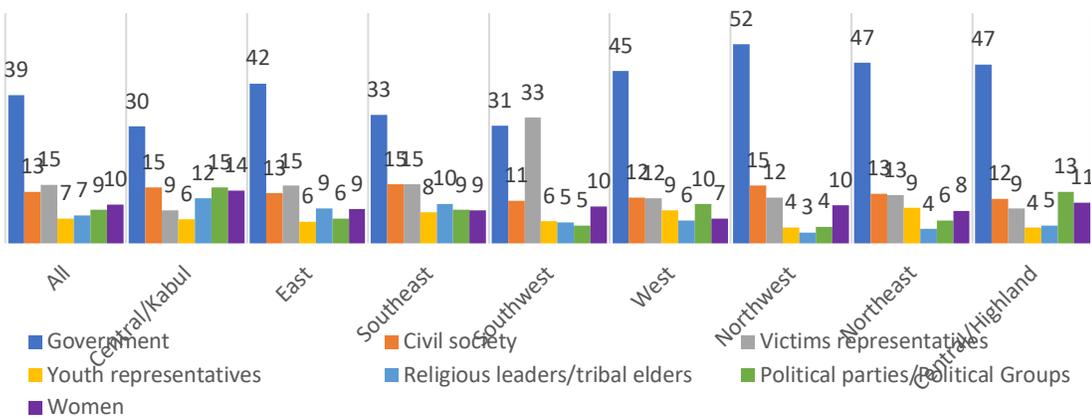
Interestingly, almost twice as many men (13%) than women (7%) said they would like to be represented by women at the negotiating table. The survey shows that there is little trust of political parties among male respondents, with only four per cent wanting to be represented by political parties or groups, whereas 14 per cent of women answered this way.

Q # 07 Who do you believe would represent your interests most effectively in peace negotiations? Comparison by gender (% of respondents)



There is a significant difference in the responses between regions. The Northwest is the only region where more than half of respondents want to be represented by the state (52%), although the state was the most popular choice in every region except the Southwest, where the victims’ representatives were considered the best choice (33%). It is in the Central/Kabul (30%), Southwest (31%), and Southeast (33%) regions that the state garnered its lowest numbers.

Q # 07 Who do you believe would represent your interests most effectively in peace negotiations? Grouped by region (% of respondents)

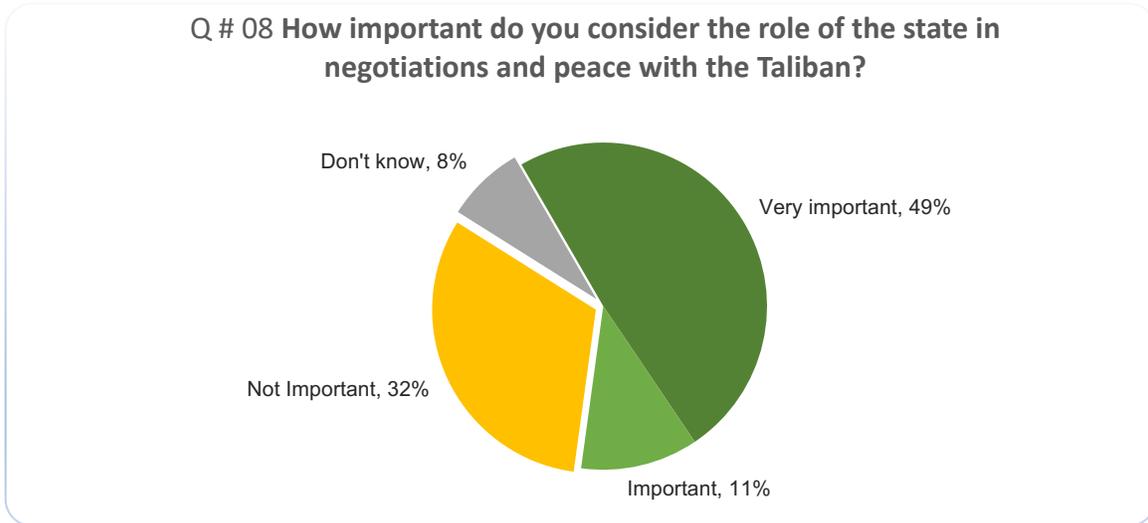


The state emerged as the leading choice for representation, with 39 per cent of respondents choosing them. We will now explore how respondents view the importance of the government’s role in the peace negotiations.

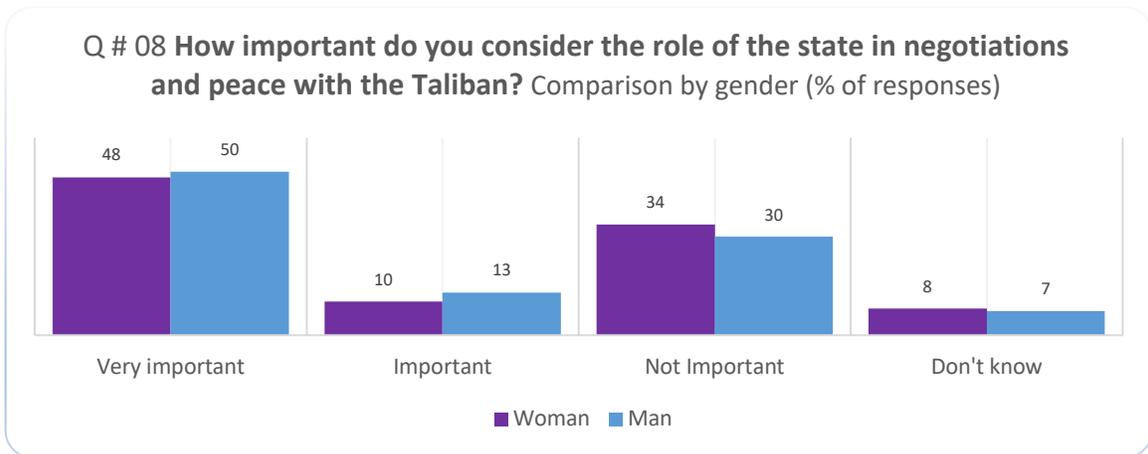
4.2. Role of the Afghan State in Peace Talks

When respondents were asked to provide their opinions on how important the role of the Afghan state is in negotiations and peace talks with Taliban, 61 per cent said that it has some degree of importance: either *very important* (48%) or *important* (12%). Less than a third (32%) said that the role of state is *not* important in peace talks with Taliban. (The remaining 8% said they don’t know.) It is worth noting that respondents who believed that

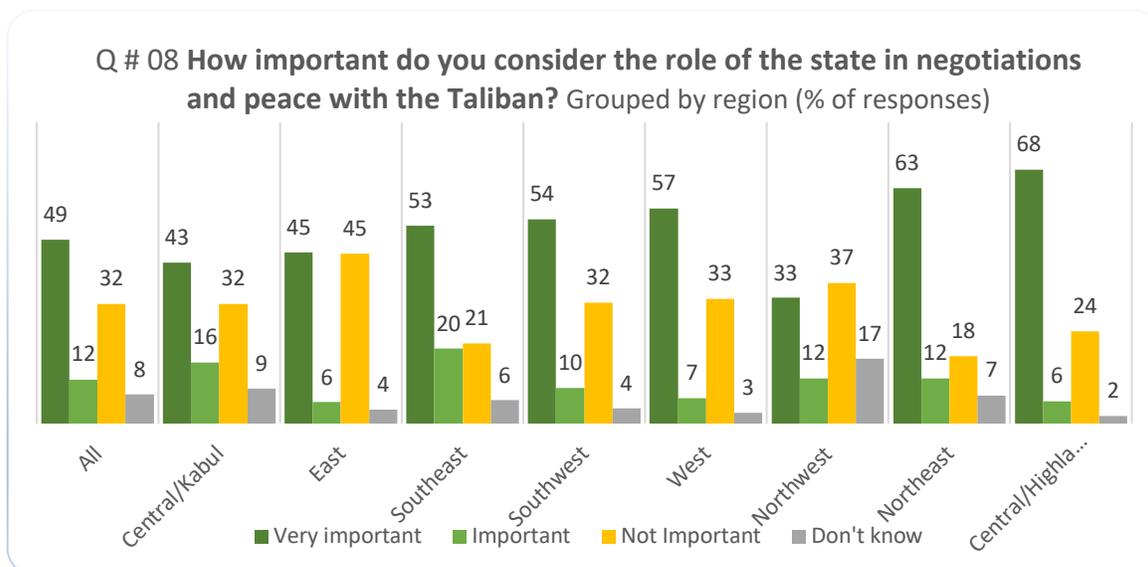
the state can best *represent their interests* (39%), from the previous section, is lower than those who said that the role of the state *is important* in the peace talks (61%).



There is little difference between gender groups in responding to this question. Nearly two-thirds of male (63%) of male and slightly fewer female (58%) respondents said that the state’s role in peace talks with Taliban is either *very important* or *important*. More female respondents (34%) than males (30%) reported that it is *not important*. The number of female and male respondents who said that they did not know was nearly identical.



There are some differences among respondents in different regions on how they view the role of the state in peace talks with the Taliban. The highest number of respondents who think the role of the state is either *very important* or *important* was seen in the Northeast (75%), Central/Highland (74%), and Southeast (73%) regions. The greatest number of respondents who stated that the role of the state is *not important* was in the East (45%), followed by Northwest (37%) regions. The Northwest also had by far the highest number of respondents who said they do not know (17%).



5. Strategy and Contents

5.1. Proposed Contents for Peace Talks Agenda

We asked respondents what they considered their top three priorities to be included in the agenda of direct peace talks between the Afghan government and Taliban. *Ceasefire and end of war* came out as the top priority, with a third of respondents listing it (33%). This was followed by *women's rights* (15%), *sustainable peace* (9%), and *considering people's recommendations and demands* (7%).

Interestingly, four per cent of respondents proposed a discussion on the development strategy of the country for the next decade. The list of the most popular responses, ranked in order of popularity, is as follows:

Q # 09:

Position	Proposed items for Peace Talks Agenda	%	Votes
1	Ceasefire & end of war	33	4702
2	Women's rights	15	2091
3	Sustainable peace	9	1264
4	Value people's recommendations & demands	7	1047
5	Establishment of security	6	888
6	The Government & Taliban's commitment for successful talks	5	680
7	Discuss major points of the country's development strategy	4	527
8	Release of prisoners	2	255
9	Regional economic activities & Afghanistan's participation	2	255

The question was asked open-ended, without giving options to the respondents, and thus we received a variety of responses. The full list of other responses is given in the following table:

Q # 09:

Position	Proposed items for Peace Talks Agenda	%	Votes
10	The Constitution	1	192
11	Islamic Republic system with Sharia implementation	1	187
12	Withdrawal of foreign forces	1	173
13	Job opportunities, especially for youth	1	156
14	Freedom in different areas, in particular freedom of expression	1	146
15	Women & girls' education & higher education	1	127
16	Maintain Republic system	1	126
17	People's civil rights (including men and women)	1	124
18	Human rights	1	123
19	Prevention of violence, especially against women	1	123
20	Establishment of justice and fairness	1	118
21	Presence of women in different walks of life, including political, social, etc.	1	116
22	Commitment & respect to the Islamic, cultural, and political values of the country	1	92
23	Advocacy for the achievements of the past 18 years	1	89

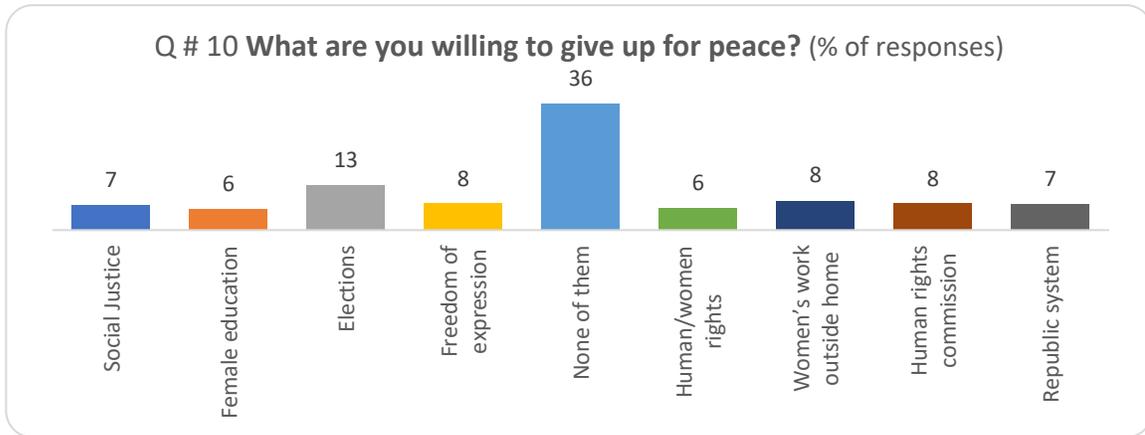
We saw earlier that the majority of respondents reported having confidence in both the Afghan government and the Taliban to reach a peace deal. They have also attached high expectations to the direct peace talks, that the two parties will reach an agreement on a variety of issues. The suggested points for the agenda show that Afghans are concerned about, and are vigilant of, the peace process. They expect the two sides of the conflict to reach an agreement on issues ranging from a ceasefire to the constitution, women rights, job opportunities, regional connectivity, the next decade's economic plan for Afghanistan, and many more issues.

We now examine what price respondents are prepared to pay for peace.

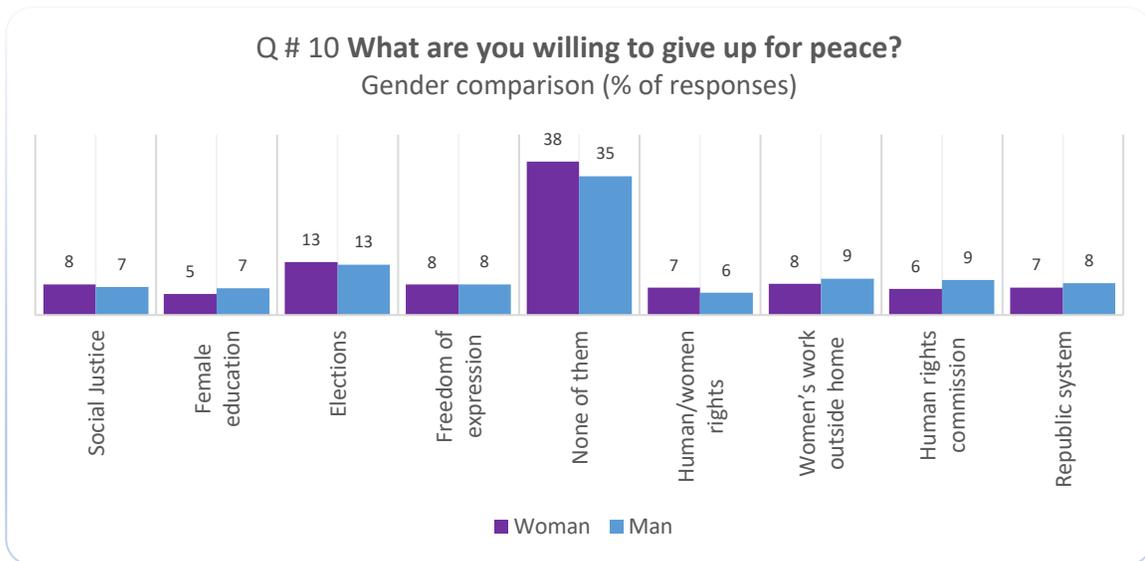
5.2. What to Give Up for Peace?

To understand what price the respondents are willing to pay for peace, we asked which of the following rights they would be willing to give up for it. More than a third of respondents (36%) said they are not ready to give up any of these elements for peace. One

in seven said that they are ready to give up elections (13%), followed by the human rights commission (8%), freedom of expression (8%), women’s work outside home (8%), social justice and the republic system (7%), human/women rights and female education (6%).

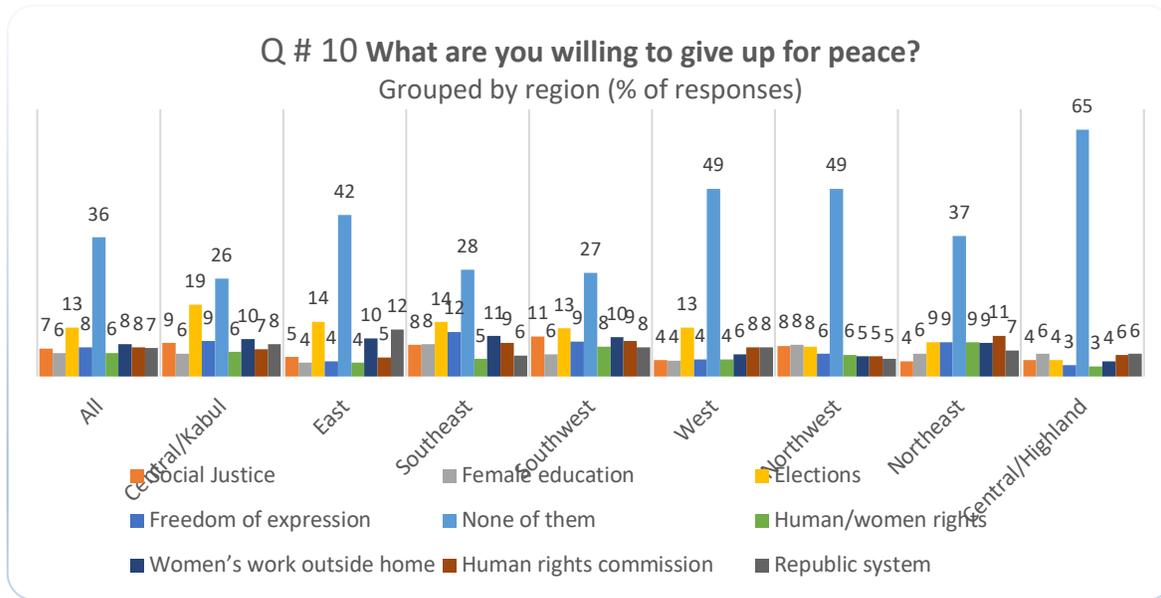


There are few differences in the responses when compared by gender, with slightly more women saying they are not willing to give up anything, and more men saying they are willing to give up the human rights commission than women..



There are, however, significant differences between the regions in response to this question. Those who said they are not willing to give up anything range from around two thirds in Central/Highland (65%), around half in Northwest and West (49%) regions, while this drops to around a quarter in Southeast (28%), Southwest (27%) and Central/Kabul (26%) regions.

The Central/Kabul, Southeast, and Southwest regions have a higher than average proportion of respondents who are willing to give up the rights listed in the question.



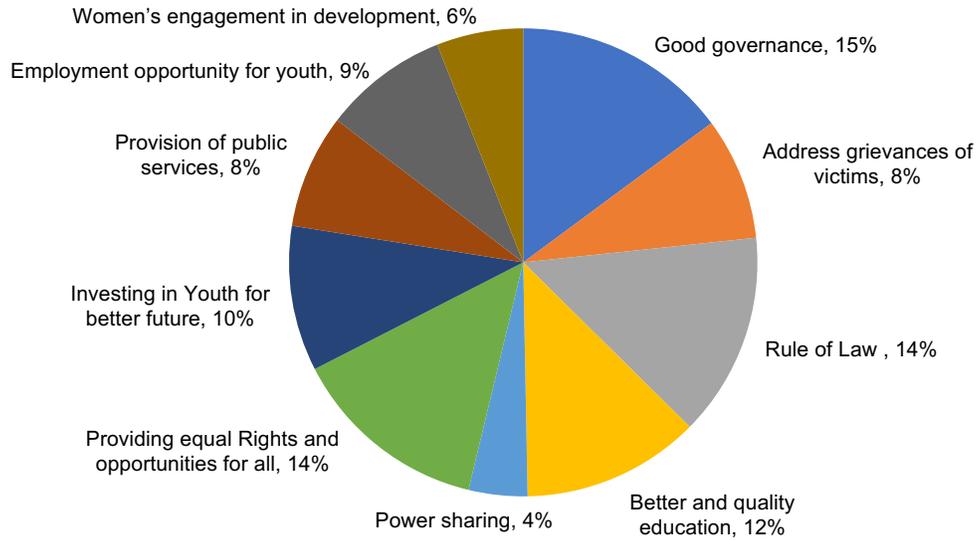
Having explored the barriers and causes for peace, the political will of both the government and the Taliban, and representation in peace talks, we asked respondents what they thought could guarantee a sustainable and durable peace in the country.

5.3. Good Strategies to Bring Peace

Opinions on a good strategy for peacebuilding were scattered around ten major strategies or strategy components proposed by the respondents. *Good governance* came out marginally on top (15%), with *rule of law* and *providing equal rights and opportunities for all* slightly behind (14%), followed by *better and quality education* (12%) and *investing in youth for better future* (10%). Those that received less than ten percent of total responses were *employment opportunities for youth* (9%), *address grievances of victims* (8%), *provision of public services* (8%), *women's engagement in development* (6%) and finally *power sharing* (4%).

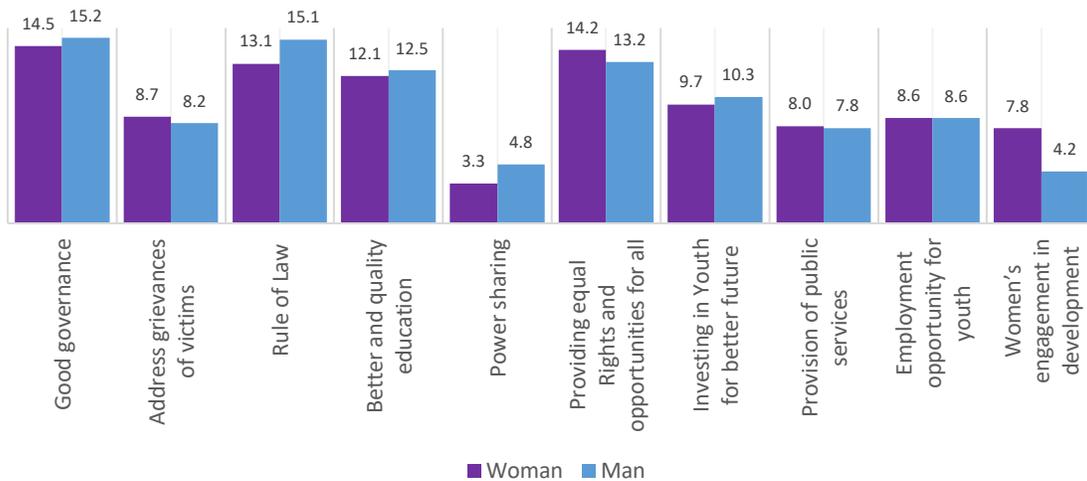
Good governance was answered as a stand-alone issue, but many other of the proposed components are also directly related to good governance; one can say that good governance is important to sustain a potential peace deal, and conversely, poor governance has a greater potential to fuel the existing conflict, or a relapse into violence following a potential peace deal with Taliban. We should also remember that *poor governance* was also considered a major challenge to the peace process in another question.

Q # 11 What do you think is a good strategy for durable peacebuilding?
(% of responses)



The responses to most strategies were largely similar across the genders, with the exception of *women to be part of the development process* — this strategy to sustain peace received nearly double the amount of answers from men (8%) than women (4%).

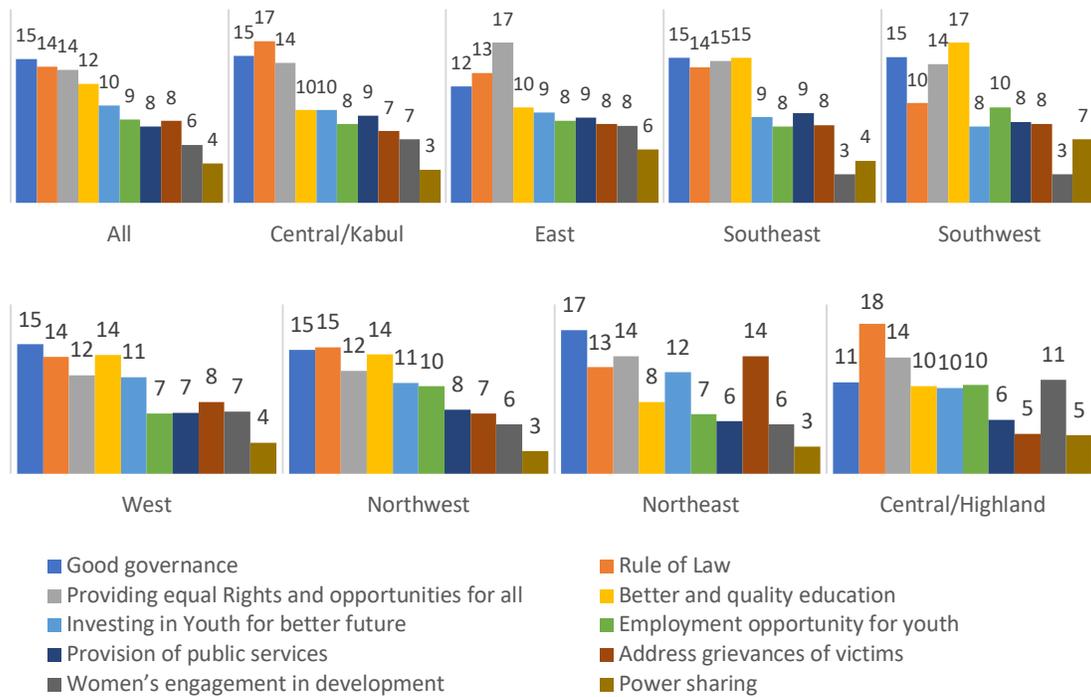
Q # 11 What do you think is a good strategy for durable peacebuilding? Gender comparison (% of responses)



At the regional level, responses for peacebuilding strategies remains in the same order, with little difference between some of these strategies. For example, *rule of law* is the leading proposed strategy in Central/Highland (18%) and Central/Kabul (17%). *Better and quality education* got the highest vote in Southwest (17%), while *provision of equal rights and opportunities for all* was the leading strategy in the East (17%) region. In all other regions, *good governance* was the top proposed strategy. As we have previously discussed,

most of the strategies proposed by the respondents are related to good governance, and this can therefore be considered the highest reported strategy to sustain peace.

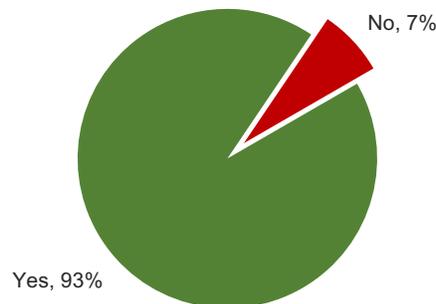
Q # 11 What do you think is a good strategy for durable peacebuilding? Grouped by region (% of responses)



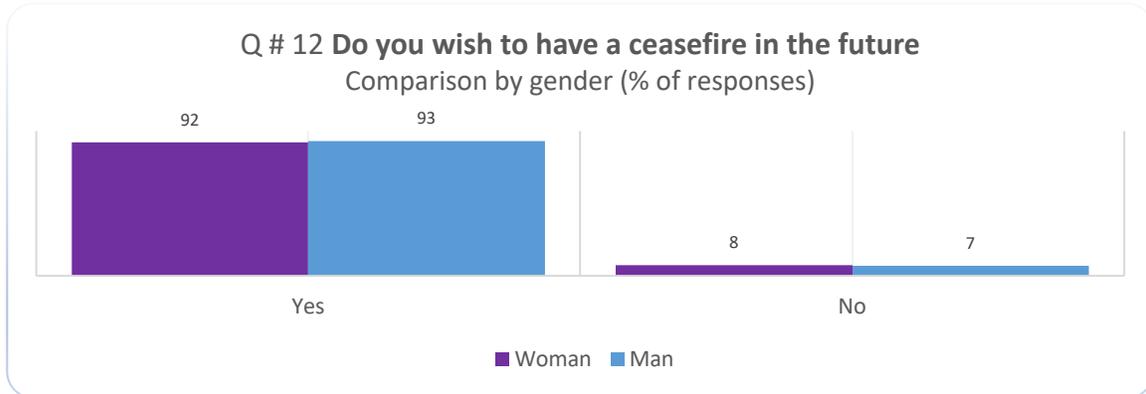
5.4. Demand for Ceasefire

A ceasefire resonates with the Afghan population: it is frequently discussed in the media and has recently been put by the President as a condition to start direct negotiations with the Taliban; yet it has always been down-played by the Taliban. We therefore asked respondents whether they wish to have a ceasefire in the near future. Almost all respondents (93%) said that they do desire a ceasefire in the country; only one in fourteen respondents (7%) said that they do not wish to have a ceasefire. Demand for a ceasefire remains the same as reported in the survey Salah conducted in 2018.

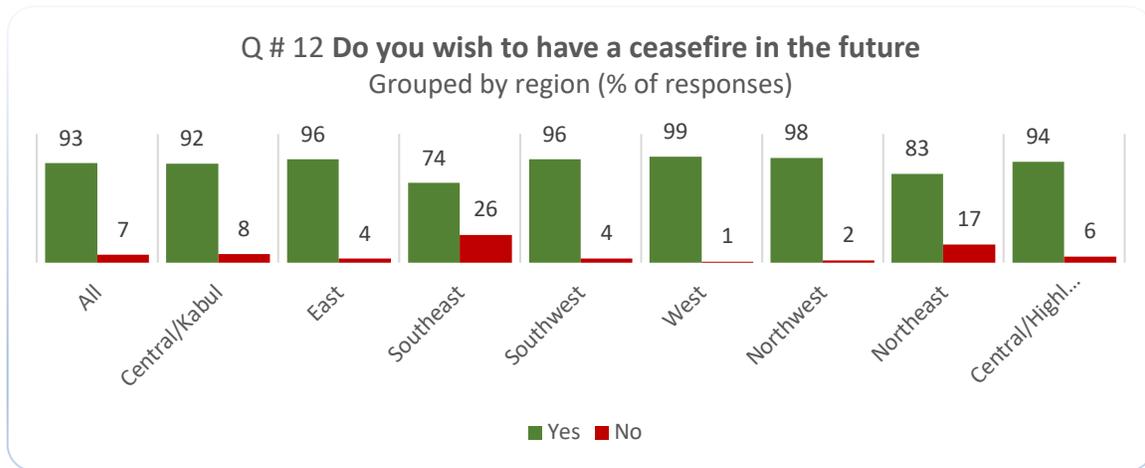
Q # 12 Do you wish to have a ceasefire in the future (% of responses)



Men and women were very closely aligned in their desire for a ceasefire, with one per cent fewer women saying that they wished to have one.

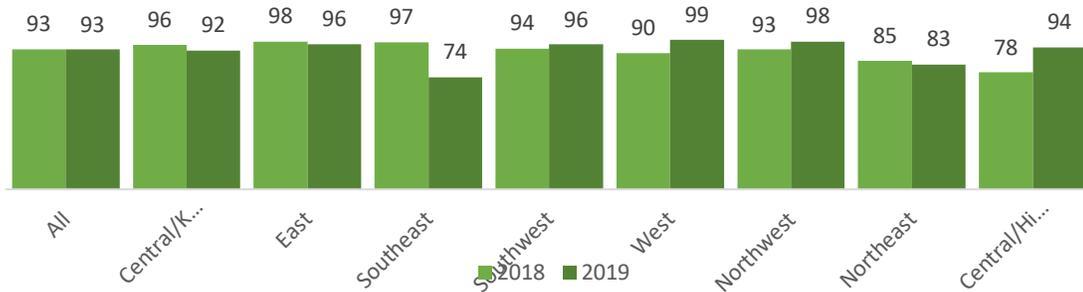


There was a greater difference in responses across the regions. The highest proportion of respondents who said they desire a ceasefire are in the West (99%), Northwest (98%), Southwest (96%), East (96%), Central/Highland (94%) and Central/ Kabul (92%) regions. The lowest desire for a ceasefire was recorded in the Southeast (74%) and Northeast (83%) — the only regions with less than 90%. These still represent a relatively high number of people in favor of a ceasefire, however.



Comparing the 2019 responses to this question to the 2018 survey, we see a significant drop in the Southeast region (97% in 2018 down to 74% in 2019), while there is a large increase in the Central/Highland region (78% in 2018 up to 94% in 2019). The Northeast region answered consistently lower in both years (85% in 2018, 83% in 2019).

Q # 12 Do you wish to have a ceasefire in the future
Positive responses, by year (%)



6. Key Actors/Stakeholders

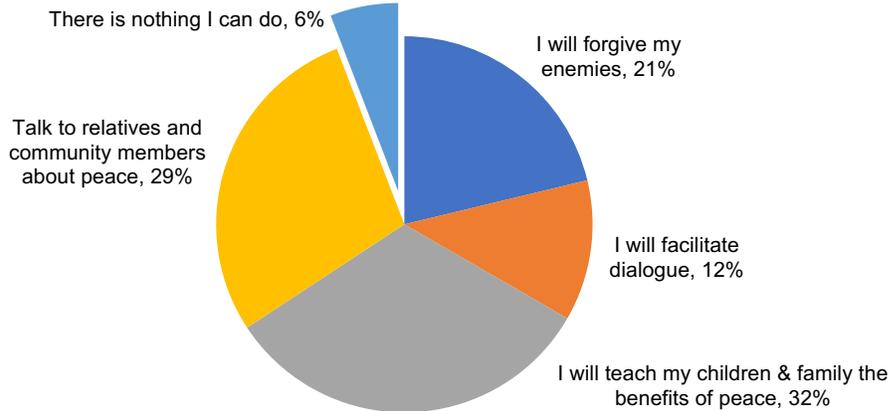
In the views of many—and particularly Afghans—the causes of the Afghan conflict are not limited to internal issues, but also have regional- and international dimensions. In the survey we asked questions exploring what internal- and external- capacities for peace could be utilized to support the peace process in Afghanistan. In this set of questions, the respondents were asked first to identify what capacities they have to build peace in their own areas. They were then asked about the role that neighboring countries could play to support the peace process in Afghanistan, and then the role of the international community in the ongoing peace process.

6.1. What One Can do for Peace?

Respondents were asked what they could do in a personal capacity to bring peace, and to make it more sustainable. Around a third of respondents (32%) said they could work with their children and families to recognize the benefits that peace offers them. More than a quarter said that they were in a position to talk to their relatives and to community members to promote peace (28%). Just over a fifth stated they were ready to forgive their enemies (21%), and 12 per cent of respondents said they were ready to facilitate a dialogue between the government and the armed opposition groups in their areas. Only six per cent of people said they were unable to do anything to bring peace.

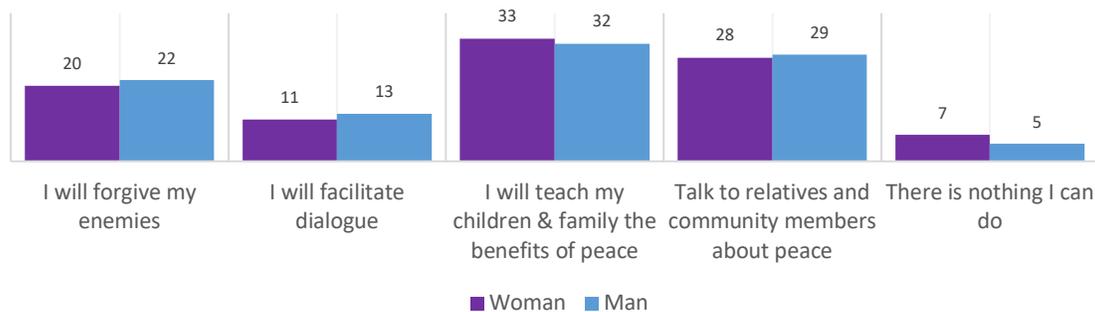
The vast majority of respondents (94%) believe they can do something to bring peace, or to help it in one way or another. It also shows not only the willingness of Afghans to secure peace, but that they recognize a role for themselves to play. In other words, Afghans do not see themselves as helpless, or overwhelmed by the external actors in the conflict. Only the small proportion who responded that they cannot do anything might feel that the internal and external actors of the conflict are stronger, or outside their sphere of influence.

Q # 13 What can you do in your personal capacity to support the peace process? (% of responses)

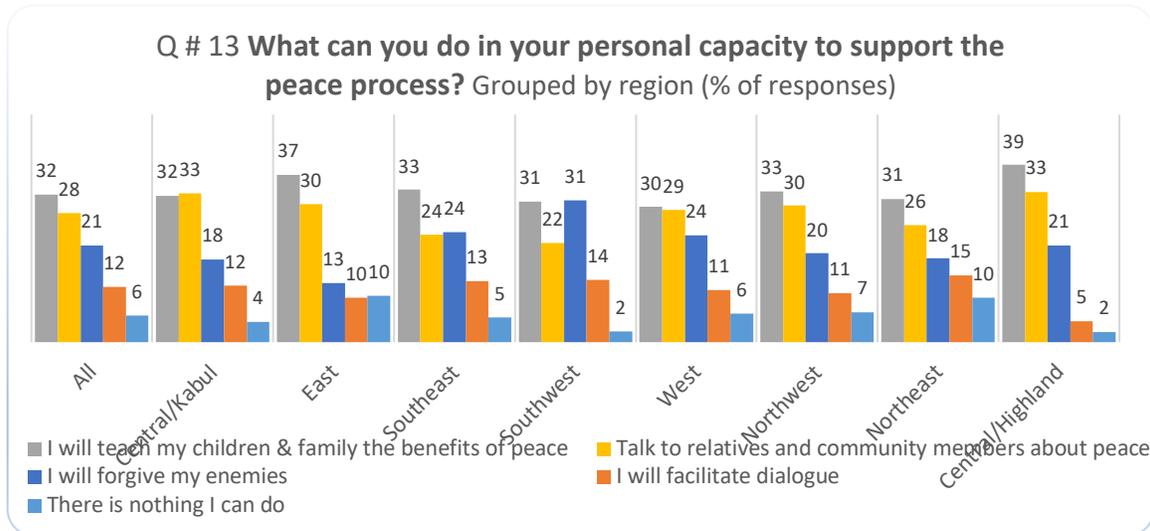


There were no major differences among gender groups in the responses to this question, with marginally more women saying that there was nothing they could do to support peace.

Q # 13 What can you do in your personal capacity to support the peace process? Comparison by gender (% of responses)



At the regional level, those that responded they were able to do something to support the peace process ranked highest in Southwest and Central/Highlands (both 98%), followed by 96 per cent in Central/Kabul, 95 per cent in Southeast, 94 per cent in West, 93 per cent in Northwest, and down to 90 per cent in both the East and Northeast regions. Respondents who said they could work with their families and children on peace remained the highest in most regions, though Central/Kabul had more people who said that they could talk to relatives and community members. The proportion of those who said they can do nothing for peace was highest in the East and Northeast (10%) regions, while the lowest was reported in Southwest and Central/Highland (2%) regions.

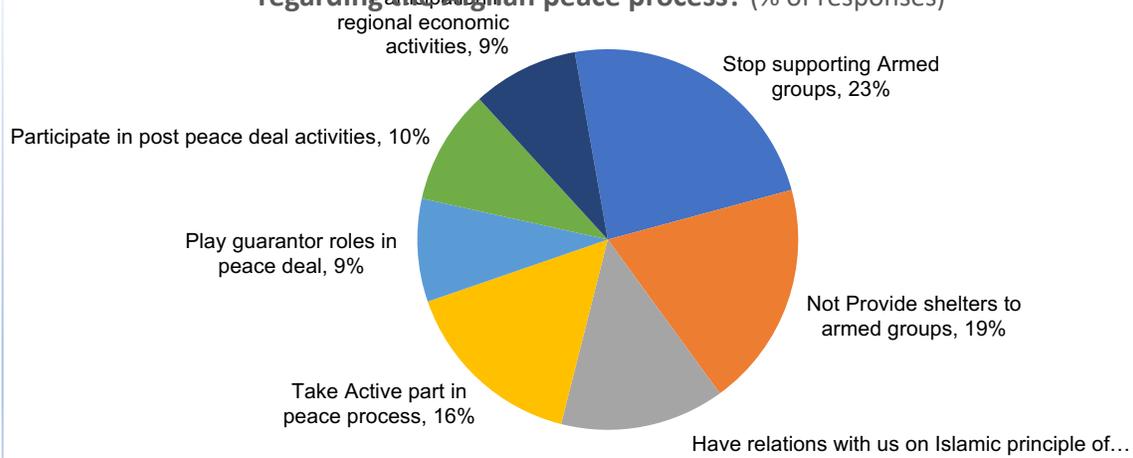


Understanding respondents’ individual spheres of influence and their willingness to work for peace, we then went on to examine their expectations of neighboring countries to support the Afghan peace process.

6.2. Expectations of Neighboring Countries

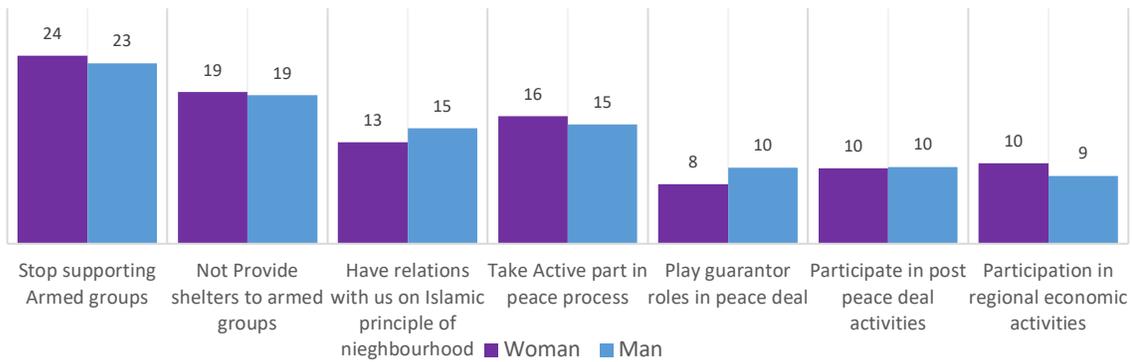
The survey asked respondents about their expectations of neighboring countries to support the Afghan peace process. Nearly a quarter said that they expect neighboring countries to stop supporting armed groups (24%), and nearly a fifth said they expect them to not provide shelter to armed groups (19%). One in six respondents said they expect neighboring countries to play a positive and active role in the peace process (16%). One in seven respondents suggested that neighboring countries should establish relations with Afghanistan as framed under Islamic principles (14%), and one in ten thought that neighboring countries should participate in post-peace deal activities (10%). Less than ten per cent said they expect neighboring countries to participate in regional economic activities (9%), or suggested that neighboring countries could play the role of guarantor in the peace deal (9%).

Q # 14 What are your expectations from neighboring countries regarding the Afghan peace process? (% of responses)

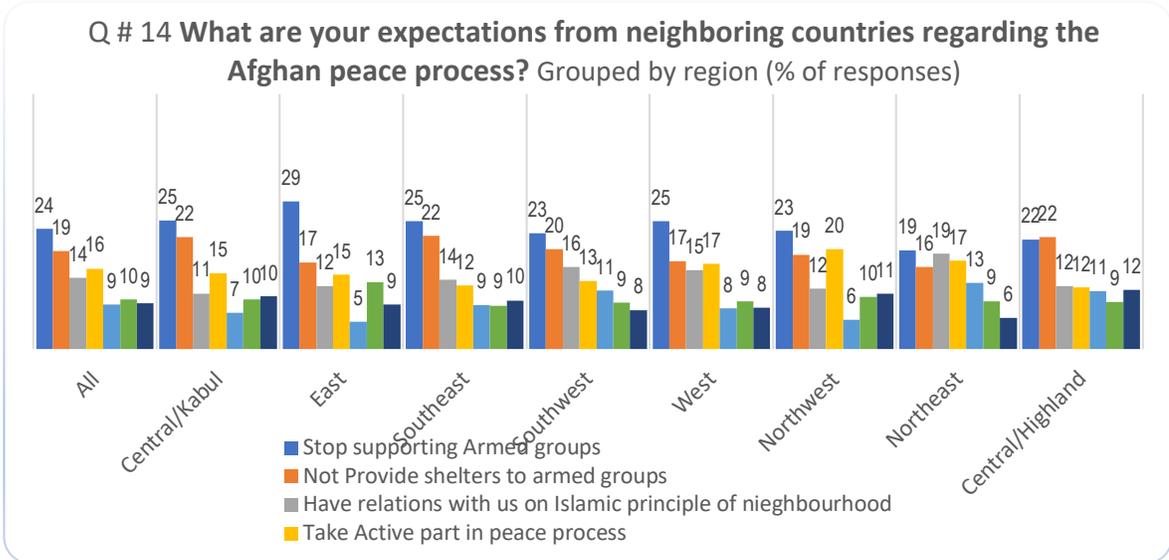


Men and women were largely aligned in their expectations of the role that neighboring countries could play in the Afghan peace process.

Q # 14 What are your expectations from neighboring countries regarding the Afghan peace process? Gender comparison (% of responses)



Similarly, there was little regional variation on the expectations of respondents vis-à-vis neighboring countries. Combining the top two expectations—stopping the support of armed groups, and not providing them shelter—accounts for more than two fifths of the responses in almost every region.

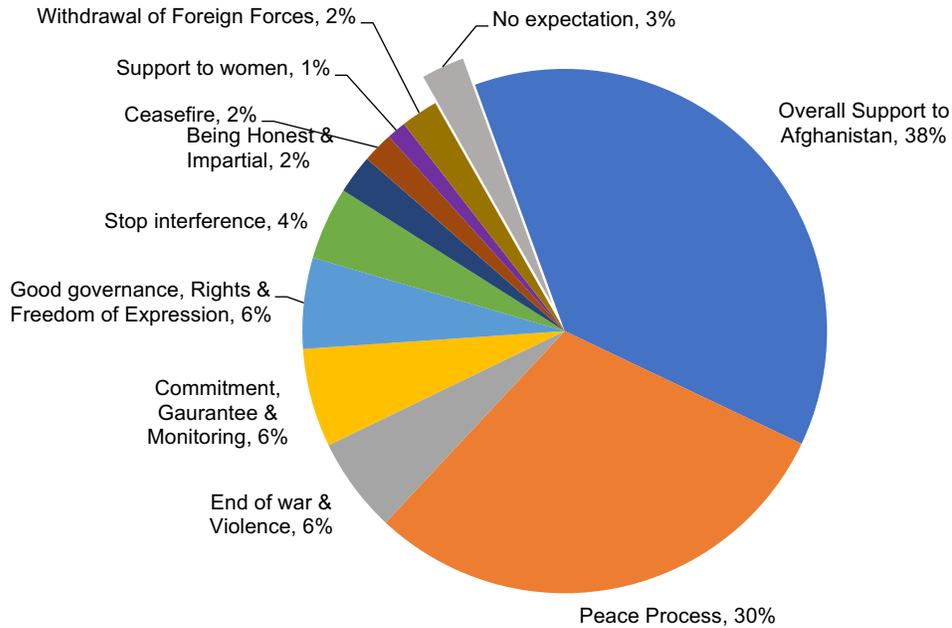


6.3. Expectations from the United Nations, International Community, and OIC

We asked respondents about the role of the United Nations, the international community, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC); this was framed as an open-ended question, where respondents were asked to list at least three of their expectations of these bodies. Nearly two fifths of respondents expected overall support to Afghanistan from the international bodies (38%). *Support for the peace process* came second, with nearly a third of respondents listing it (30%). Three subjects featured in six per cent of respondents' answers: *support to end the war and violence*; *commitment, guarantee and monitoring of the peace talks and support in post peace deal era*; and the *support to promote good governance, citizen rights and freedom of expression*.

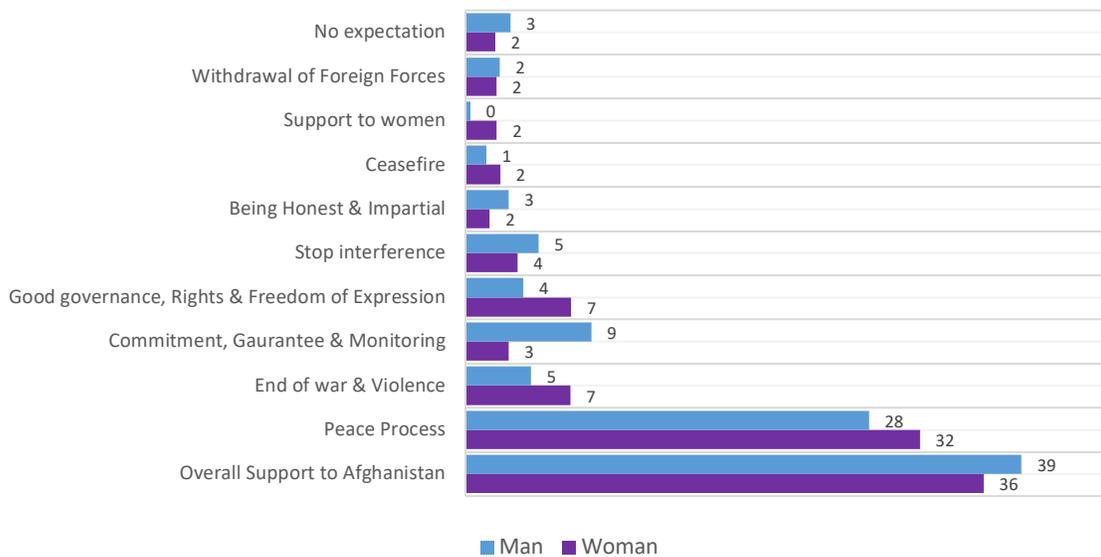
Four per cent of respondents expected these international actors to *stop the interference of neighboring countries*, and two per cent wanted them to *support Afghanistan after the withdrawal of foreign forces*. An equal number mentioned that these bodies should *be honest and impartial while providing support to Afghanistan* (2%), and to *support the efforts for a ceasefire* (2%). One per cent said they *expect support for women*. Two per cent of respondents said they do not have any expectations from these actors.

Q # 15 What do you expect from the UN, the International community, and the OIC to facilitate the peace process?



There were some minor differences between gender groups in the support they expected from the United Nations, international community, and OIC.

Q # 15 What do you expect from the UN, the International community, and the OIC to facilitate the peace process? Gender comparison (%)



Across the regions of Afghanistan, there were significant differences in the expectations of respondents for overall support to Afghanistan, ranging from 42 per cent in Northeast, Central/Highland, and Northwest regions to 26 per cent in the East and Southeast regions.

Expectations of the UN, the international community and the OIC in ending the war and violence was highest in Central/Kabul region (12%)—double the national average—but this dropped to three per cent in the Central/Highland and Southwest regions, half the national average. The West region most expected their support in the peace process (42%), and the Northeast region expressed by far the greatest *lack* of expectation, with ten per cent saying they had no expectations. By comparison, nobody in the Central/Highland and East regions said they had no expectations.

Q # 15

Expectation	All	Central/ Kabul	East	Southeast	Southwest	West	Northwest	Northeast	Central/ Highland
Overall support to Afghanistan	38	41	26	26	41	32	42	42	42
Support the peace process	30	25	36	38	25	42	27	22	32
End of war & violence	6	12	8	4	3	4	4	6	3
Commitment, guarantee & monitoring	6	8	11	7	8	3	2	5	8
Good governance, rights & freedom of expression	6	6	5	3	2	4	12	4	4
Stop interference	4	2	4	4	9	6	2	5	7
Being honest & impartial	2	1	2	4	2	3	2	5	2
Ceasefire	2	2	1	6	1	-	3	1	1
Support to women	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Withdrawal of foreign forces	2	1	5	3	7	1	1	-	-
No expectation	3	1	-	4	1	3	2	10	-

7. Methodology

The peace perception survey was conducted in each of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces between 15-31 December 2019. The survey work was completed in three phases, using the methodology described below.

Phase 1: Pre-field work activities/steps:

Prior to field work commencing, phase one consisted of the following four steps:

Step 1: Development of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was drafted and sent for comments to all stakeholders and organizations engaged in the survey. After receiving back comments and incorporating them into the questionnaire, it was translated into Pashto and Dari. These two versions—Pashto and Dari—were then reviewed by all representatives of the Salah Consortium member organizations which were engaged in the survey. This was to ensure that they reflect the main purpose of the survey, and specifically that each question is accurate.

Step 2: Training of provincial supervisors and field-testing the questionnaire

After the Pashto- and Dari-translated versions were reviewed, the survey was finalized and all the regional and provincial supervisors were given training on how they could train their field surveyors. The training was thus conducted using a cascade method at the regional- and provincial-level, assigned for each of the Salah member organizations. At the same time, these supervisors conducted a field-test of the questionnaire, to ensure that there was no duplication of data in responses, and to verify the logic of each question in the survey.

The feedback from the field-test led to some changes that were incorporated back into the questions, though these changes were not significant. The regional and provincial supervisors of the member organizations then trained their field surveyors or enumerators in each of their respective regions and provinces.

Step 3: Sample plan for the provinces

A sample plan was developed for the field work. This plan included the following:

1. The number of interviews per province, where the province is the first stratified unit in this survey;
2. The plan ensured that the urban- and rural-divide in the sample size was considered, based on the relative proportion of the population;
3. The plan specified the number of female and male interviewees per province;
4. It also specified the number of female and male field surveyors or enumerators in each province.

Step 4: Development of the database

At this step, the consultant who was charged with writing up the report of the survey developed a database that was put in place before any data was sent from the field. The data entry staff who would receive data from the field were trained on how to correctly enter the data into the database. When they received the data from the field, they began entering it into the database. After all the field data was received and entered into the database, it was sent to the consultant for the third phase of the survey.

Phase 2: Activities/steps during the field work:

Step 1: Send the questionnaire to the regions and provinces

The questionnaire was distributed to the provinces depending on the level of infrastructure available in those locations: in some cases it was printed here in Kabul, and in other cases the soft version was sent to the provinces to be directly printed there. The provincial supervisors then distributed the blank questionnaire package to the field surveyors/enumerators. The field work, and conducting interviews, was then ready to start.

Step 2: The field work was conducted face-to-face, as in-person interviews

When the field surveyors and enumerators were fully trained and the hard-copies of the questionnaire were in place, the field work then began. This continued for two weeks, and included the selection of interviewees as described below:

1. Sampling points were randomly selected and distributed to the field surveyors or enumerators in each district;
2. Household selection was chosen randomly by the surveyors;
3. Selection of interviewees in the household: field surveyors or enumerators selected the interviewees randomly, according to the sampling number of interviews (ten interviews per sampling point).

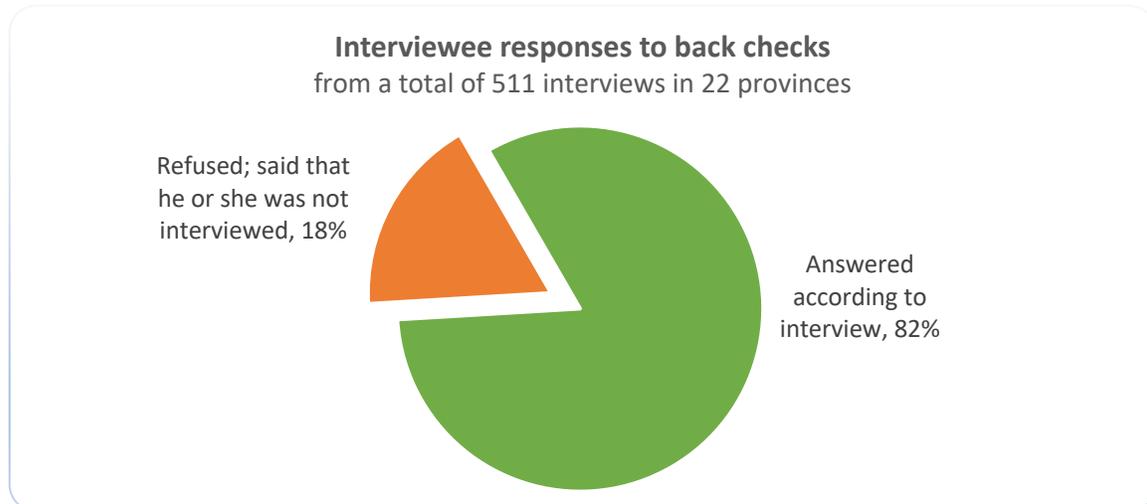
Step 3: Monitoring, and checking, of processes during the field work

All Salah Consortium member organizations have rigorous monitoring and evaluation system/units that are run by qualified teams. These teams are responsible for monitoring the project implementation during the life of the project, as well as a final evaluation at the end of each project. In this survey a joint monitoring team was established, the members of which conducted direct monitoring of five per cent—which corresponds to 343 interviews—in all 34 provinces in the different sampled areas. The monitoring team provided urgent, or on-time, feedback if their findings highlighted the following:

- if there is need for a **change of field surveyor**, in case she or he is not able to conduct interviews;
- if the field surveyor(s) **changes the sampling point** without prior permission of the responsible person(s) at the provincial and central levels;
- if the **selection method is not used** during household or interviewee selection;
- if the field surveyor(s) is/are **not using complete questions/questionnaires** during the interviews.

The second job of the joint monitoring and evaluation team was to back check eight per cent of the conducted interviews, in different provinces. The sampling points for back checks were selected on a random basis. In the case where the findings show that there is a major mistake in a conducted interview, the provincial and regional supervisor(s) asked a different field surveyor/s to conduct those interviews again, to ensure the required levels of transparency and accountability are in place. In total, 511 interviews were backchecked in 22 provinces, with at least one province for each of the eight regions. The majority of back checked interviewees had been properly interviewed, and said that their responses were recorded correctly (82%), with the remaining 18 per cent (less than a fifth) who either refused to say whether they had taken part in the interview, or said that they had not taken

part. The majority of respondents who said no to the back checkers were men or women from insecure areas. It should be noted that when a person living in an insecure area receives a call from someone checking on whether he or she had taken part in an interview, it is common that they respond in the negative.



Phase 3: Post field work activities:

The final phase of the project involves collating and cleaning the data, and then analyzing it for writing up the report.

Step 1: Receiving completed interview sheets from provinces

After finishing the interviews, the completed questionnaires were sent to the data-entry team via email (or other internet facilities) as scanned documents, in order to speed up the data-entry process. With fast transmission of the interviews, the data entry team was punctual in preparing the final dataset for cleaning and filtering, and then finally the analysis and report writing.

The original copies of the interview sheets were sent to the main office team for archiving.

Step 2: Data cleaning and filtering

Once the data from all over the country—each of the 34 provinces—was received and entered into the database by the data entry staff, it was then sent to the consultant who began to clean and filter the data. This process identified 421 interviews that were either 95% similar or totally incomplete or duplicated; these interviews were removed from the database. From a total of 6869 interviews, after this removal, the remaining 6448 interviews were analyzed.

Step 3: Data analysis

The consultant analyzed the cleaned and filtered data, and prepared charts based on various variables for the report write-up. This was the most time-consuming part of the work on the database, especially for questions which had multiple response or open-ended questions.

Step 4: Report write-up and review

The consultant started the write-up of the survey report and provided an initial draft for review to the leading team of the consortium and other stakeholders. After submission of the initial draft report, a presentation was given to the Salah leading team members, who established a technical review team that was given the responsibility of reviewing the draft and providing comments to the consultant. The technical review team provided all comments either via the Salah leadership or directly to the consultant. They also provided comments on the structure and formatting of the report. The consultant incorporated the comments and then prepared the 2nd draft of the report with the updated structure. The 2nd draft of the report was shared with the technical review team, who provided comments to the author of the report, the consultant.

Step 5: Press Conference to launch the survey report

The consortium members, together with the media, will launch the report's findings and recommendations through a press conference, and present both the findings and recommendations to all peace stakeholders engaged in the Afghan Peace Process.

Margin of error and level of confidence

The survey's margin of error is ± 1.18 , with a level of confidence of 95 per cent (with a five per cent confidence interval).

Notes

Confidentiality – the personal and demographic data of the interviewees will be kept confidentially, and cannot be exposed under any circumstances. The field surveyors will respect the ethical- and professional norms and standards of conducting interviews. The Salah Consortium member organizations are responsible for any unethical behavior of their surveyors.

In order to avoid having any obstruction from state security agencies, the main office in Kabul obtained a letter from the leadership of the Ministry of Interior Affairs. This instructed their staff and security entities, and persons at the provincial and district level, to not only permit the field surveyors to conduct the field work, but also help and support them in case of any insecurity or incident.

8. Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to give the voice of ordinary Afghans a position in the peace process. The survey has been part of these efforts, and will not only be used as a tool and content for the peace process and peace talks, but will also further efforts to encourage Afghans to contribute to, and be active in, bringing peace to the country. Whilst the peace process is currently driven by foreigners and the Afghan political elite, ordinary Afghans perceive a more prominent role for civil society, tribal elders and others.

The study reveals that ordinary Afghans perceive economic problems and the lack of jobs as a primary reason for youth joining armed groups, and that ideology is only a minor factor. Whilst poor governance is considered a major source of conflict, people perceive external factors—including neighboring countries and the international community—as

also playing an important role. Similarly, people believe that the Afghan conflict has local, regional and international dimensions. This does not preclude, however, people being eager to contribute directly towards the promotion of peace at the grassroots level. This engagement shows that people do not feel helpless, and consider a role for themselves in building sustainable peace. There is a significant drop in the public perception of ISIS as a major challenge to peace. Interestingly, nearly twice as many men (13%) than women (7%) want to be represented by women at the negotiating table. The survey shows that there is little trust among male respondents in political parties—that one in twenty-five of them wants to be represented by political parties—while the number for women is one in seven.

According to the survey results, women's rights is a top issue to be included in the peace agenda, and when it comes to representation, the role of the state is prominent in responses. Furthermore, people believe that victims' families and civil society are other groups that represent them. The study reveals that 93 per cent of people demand a ceasefire, and the majority of people believe that the state (79%) and the Taliban (63%) have a strong political will for peace. It is important to note, however, that the majority of respondents are not keen on giving up on the achievements of last 18 years. This study also shows that there are high expectations from the peace deal, and that people believe that sustainable peace involves more than just an end of violence.

In response to the peace talks agenda, the survey shows that people want not only peace, but economic development, good governance, regional connectivity, and international assistance etc. This can be interpreted as peace being not only an end of violence, but also better living conditions in the aftermath of the war.

9. Appendices

Appendix 01: Proposed Topics or Items for Peace Talks Agenda

Pos.	Proposed items for Peace Talks Agenda	%	Votes
1	Ceasefire & End of War	33	4702
2	Women's Rights	15	2091
3	Sustainable Peace	9	1264
4	Value People's Recommendations & Demands	7	1047
5	Establishment of Security	6	888
6	The Government & Taliban's Commitment for Successful Talks	5	680
7	Discuss Major Points of Country's Development Strategy	4	527
8	Release of Prisoners	2	255
9	Regional Economic Activities & Afghanistan Participation	2	255
10	The Constitution	1	192
11	Islamic Republic System with Sharia Implementation	1	187
12	Withdrawal of Foreign Forces	1	173
13	Job opportunities, especially for youth	1	156
14	Freedom in different areas, in particular freedom of expression	1	146
15	Women & Girls' Education & Higher Education	1	127
16	Maintain Republic System	1	126
17	People's civil rights (including men and women)	1	124
18	Human Rights	1	123
19	Prevention of Violence Especially Against Women	1	123
20	Establishment of Justice and Fairness	1	118
21	Presence of Women in different walks of life, including political, social etc.	1	116
22	Commitment & Respect to Islamic, Cultural, and Political values of the country	1	92
23	Advocacy for the outcomes of the past 18 years	1	89
24	Promotion of Secondary and Higher Education & Clarification of Both (Government & Taliban's) positions in this regard	0.44	63
25	Defining & Keeping National Interests	0.34	48
26	Bringing Social Justice	0.31	44
27	Transitional Justice	0.27	39
28	Maintain ANA & All Security Institutions	0.20	29
29	Maintain Elections System	0.18	26

Pos.	Proposed items for Peace Talks Agenda	%	Votes
30	Brotherhood and Unity	0.15	22
31	To forgive each other and ask the nation for forgiveness	0.15	21
32	Know-how of relations with neighbors	0.16	23
33	Democracy	0.13	18
34	Know-how of Taliban's reintegration to the system	0.10	14
35	Inclusive system	0.10	14
36	Clarification of Taliban's Goals/Objectives	0.09	13
37	Rule of Law	0.09	13
38	Establishment of a powerful system	0.08	12
39	Support for civilians	0.08	12
40	No recurrence of Actions of Taliban's past regime	0.08	12
41	National Sovereignty	0.09	13
42	Relations with other countries	0.10	14
43	Durand Line	0.06	8
44	Role & participation of all ethnic groups in future government	0.06	8
45	Sharing Power	0.05	7
46	Jihad against who?	0.05	7
47	Commitment & Guarantee of peace deal by all Taliban's groups	0.05	7
48	Discuss future of the people	0.04	6
49	Demands of both parties to be clear	0.04	6
50	Technology and Development	0.04	5
51	Know-how of the system after peace deal	0.04	5
52	Maintain legal, cultural and social values of the people	0.04	5
53	Good governance after peace deal with Taliban	0.04	5
54	Clarifying future of public goods and properties	0.04	5
55	No power distribution	0.04	5
56	Country's water management	0.04	5
57	Prevention of Afghans' refuge to other countries	0.03	4
58	Support of International Community	0.04	5
59	Being Independent Country	0.03	4
60	Islamic Emirate	0.02	3
61	Commitment to International laws	0.02	3
62	Interim Government	0.03	4
63	Commitment & Guarantee for the future	0.02	3
64	Move of Taliban's offices to Afghanistan	0.01	2

Pos.	Proposed items for Peace Talks Agenda	%	Votes
65	Maintenance of current freedom after peace deal	0.01	2
66	Constitution amendment	0.01	2
67	Respect & provision of victims' rights & their families	0.03	4
68	Political Parties demands	0.01	2
69	Prevention of Violent Extremism	0.01	2
70	Consideration of ethnic & religious minorities' rights	0.01	2
71	Know-how of peace deal guarantee	0.01	2
72	The system to be changed	0.02	3
73	Abolishing groups and parties	0.01	1
74	Return of Taliban to Afghanistan	0.01	1
75	Talks about armed groups	0.01	1
76	Decision has to be on betterment of Afghan people	0.01	1
77	To stop propaganda against each other	0.01	1
78	How to defend country jointly	0.01	1
79	Know-how of reaching agreement	0.01	1
80	How to stop interference of other countries	0.01	2
81	Know-how of People's participation	0.01	1
82	Maintain National Programs	0.01	1
83	Maintain & support Civil Society	0.01	2
84	Participatory Government	0.01	1
85	Support & guarantee of neighbors and International Community	0.01	1
86	No inclusion of non-logical topics in the agenda	0.01	1
87	Agreement on future system	0.01	1
88	No use of Afghan soil against other countries	0.01	1
89	Provision of public services to remote areas	0.01	1
90	Media has not to be abandoned	0.01	1
91	Economic relations with the world	0.01	1
92	The conditions of both parties to be logical	0.01	1
93	Guarantee of powerful & engaged countries	0.01	1
94	Stopping cooperation with terrorist groups	0.01	1
95	To reach agreement with Americans	0.01	1
96	Joint struggle against Daesh	0.01	1
97	Ending corruption	0.01	1
98	Development of laws for contemporary issues	0.01	1

Pos.	Proposed items for Peace Talks Agenda	%	Votes
99	Poppy cultivation and drugs trade	0.01	1
100	International Aid and Assistance	0.01	1
101	Armed collections Mechanism after peace agreement	0.01	1
102	Monarchy system	0.01	1
103	System building	0.01	1
104	Everything to be in peace agreement	0.01	1
105	All conflicting issues have to be discussed	0.01	1
106	Economic & Development status of Taliban controlled areas	0.01	1
	Total Responses	100%	14,219

Appendix 02: Planned and Actual Size by Province

The total planned sample size for this survey was 6000 interviews. During the actual interviews, at least ten interviews were added to each province in their planned sample size. In some provinces, however, the sample size was increased to a level that could affect the results of the survey, and so those extra interviews were removed. Meanwhile, during the cleaning and filtering process, some other interviews (that had a match of 95–100 per cent) were also removed. In total, 421 interviews were removed from a total of 6869 interviews, leaving a final sample size of 6448 interviews that were analyzed in this report. The following table shows the sample size per province.

	Province	Sample size		Difference
		Actual	Planned	
1	Kabul	1044	918	126
2	Parwan	148	138	10
3	Kapisa	110	100	10
4	Logar	110	100	10
5	Wardak	134	124	10
6	Panjshir	110	100	10
7	Nangarhar	326	316	10
8	Laghman	110	100	10
9	Kunar	110	100	10
10	Nooristan	110	100	10
11	Paktia	125	115	10
12	Paktika	110	100	10
13	Khost	130	120	10
14	Ghazni	266	256	10
15	Urozgan	110	100	10
16	Kandahar	266	256	10
17	Helmand	202	192	10
18	Nimroz	110	100	10
19	Zabul	110	100	10
20	Herat	405	395	10
21	Farah	116	106	10
22	Ghor	154	144	10
23	Badghis	113	103	10
24	Balkh	287	277	10
25	Jawzjan	123	113	10

26	Sar-e-Pul	126	116	10
27	Samangan	110	100	10
28	Faryab	218	208	10
29	Kunduz	213	211	2
30	Takhar	215	205	10
31	Badakhshan	208	198	10
32	Baghlan	200	190	10
33	Bamyan	110	100	10
34	Daikundi	110	100	10
	Total	6448	6000	448

Appendix 3: Composition of Regions

Region	Provinces					
Central/Kabul	Kabul	Parwan	Logar	Wardak	Kapisa	Panjshir
East	Nangarhar	Laghman	Kunar	Nooristan		
Southeast	Paktia	Paktika	Khost	Ghazni		
Southwest	Kandahar	Helmand	Zabul	Urozgan	Nimroz	
West	Herat	Farah	Ghor	Badghis		
Northwest	Balkh	Samangan	Faryab	Sar-e-Pul	Jawzjan	
Northeast	Kunduz	Takhar	Badakhshan	Baghlan		
Central/Highland	Bamyan	Daikundi				

Appendix 4: Interview Questionnaire

Name:	Age:	Gender:
Degree of Education:	Ethnicity:	Native Language:
Occupation:	Phone number:	
Village:	District:	Province:
Interview date:	Start time:	End Time:

Question 01 – In your opinion, what do you think are the barriers to a sustainable peace?

You can only choose maximum five responses

a	ISIS	h	Drug Mafia
b	Poor provincial administration	i	Neighboring countries
c	Mines Mafia	j	Poverty

d	Presence of foreign forces	k	Powerbrokers /Mafia
e	Foreign terrorist groups	L	Corruption
f	Lack of people's support	m	Tribal conflicts
g	Lack of Rule of Law	N	Local militia groups
o	Other reason		

Question 02: What, do you think, are the main reasons that youth join illegal armed groups especially Taliban? Multiple responses

A	Ideological	F	Lack of job opportunities
B	Grievances	G	Presence of foreign forces
C	Economic reasons	H	Local warlords
D	Bad governance/government	I	Corruption in Justice system
e	Greed in use of power	J	Others

Question 03 – Are you confident that the government has political will to bring peace?

Please choose the answer of your choice

1	Very confident	3	Not confident
2	Somewhat confident	4	Not confident at all

Question 04 – Are you confident that Taliban have political will to bring peace?

Please choose the answer of your choice

1	Very confident	3	Not confident
2	Somewhat confident	4	Not confident at all

Question 05 – Are you confident that the direct talk between the government and Taliban will result in peace? Please choose the answer of your choice

1	Yes, I am confident it will bring peace	3	Not confident
2	Yes, somewhat confident	4	Don't know

Question 06: if Taliban leaders sign peace agreement, do you think it will be accepted and welcomed by all Taliban groups?

1	All groups of Taliban	2	Only Qatar based Taliban
3	Taliban related to Quetta leadership	4	Other:

Questions 07– In your opinion, which of the following will represent your interests more effectively in the peace negotiation? Please choose the answer of your choice

1	Government	5	Religious leaders/tribal elders
2	Civil society	6	Political parties/Political Groups
3	Victims representatives	7	Women
4	Youth representatives	8	Others:

Question 08 – How important do you think the role of government is in negotiation and peace with Taliban?

Please choose the answer of your choice

1	Very important	3	Important
2	Not important	4	Don't know

Question 09: What are your top three priorities that you would like to be included in the agenda of direct talks with Taliban? Please provide three responses in priority order.

1	
2	
3	

Question 10: Which of the following are you willing to give up for peace? Multiple responses

A	Social Justice	F	Human/women rights
B	Female education	G	Women's work outside home
C	Elections	H	Human rights commission
D	Freedom of expression	I	Republic system
E	None of the above	J	Others:

Question 11: What do you think is a good strategy for durable peacebuilding?

Please choose the answer of your choice

A	Improved culture of transparency, accountability, effectiveness and responsiveness of the state's institutions (good governance)	F	Providing equal Rights and opportunities to all
---	--	---	---

B	Address grievances of victims	G	Investing in Youth for a Sustainable Future
C	Rule of Law	h	Provision of public services
D	Better and quality education	I	Employment opportunity for youth
E	Power sharing	J	Women's engagement in development
10	Others:		

Question 12 – Do you wish to have ceasefire in the future? Please choose the answer of your choice

1	Yes	2	No
---	-----	---	----

Question 13: what can you do in your personal capacity to support peace process?
Multiple responses

1	I will forgive my enemies	2	I will facilitate dialogue
3	I will teach my children & family on peace benefits	4	Talk to relatives and community members about peace
5	There is nothing I can do	6	Other:

Question 14: What are your expectations from the neighboring countries in regards to Afghan peace process? Multiple responses

1	Stop supporting Armed groups	2	Not Provide shelters to armed groups
3	To establish relationship with us on Islamic principle of neighborhoods	4	Take Active part in peace process
5	Play guarantor roles in peace deal	6	Participate in post peace deal activities
7	Participation in regional economic activities	8	Other:

Question 15: What do you expect the international community to do to facilitate the peace process? Please write at least three

1	
2	
3	