AFGHAN YOUTH ENGAGEMENT + DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

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Canadian Summit on Afghanistan

2 Years after the Afghanistan Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities for Canada

Hilton Garden Inn Toronto/Vaughan | Sunday, August 13, 2023 | 9:00am-5:00 pm EST

Agenda

8:30-9:30 AM - *Toscana B*
Registration and networking with breakfast

9:30 AM - *Toscana B*
Opening remarks by AYEDI

9:45 AM - *Toscana B*
Opening Address by Salma Zahid, MP for Scarborough-Centre, Member of Special Committee on Afghanistan, Chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

10:00 AM - *Toscana B*
Keynote Fireside Chat with Mr. Richard Bennett, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan
Moderated by Khalidha Nasiri, AYEDI Executive Director

11:00 AM - *Toscana B*
Plenary Panel: How Can Canada Support Afghan Women? Reflections on the Past 2 Years and Looking Ahead
Moderator: Hon. Senator Marilou McPhedran
Panelists:

- Hon. Maryam Monsef, P.C., Founder and CEO of Onward
- Freshta Hemmati, CEO, Afghanistan Journalists Support Organization (AJSO)
- Nasrin Husseini, Canadian Hazara Humanitarian Services (CHHS), BBC Top 100 Women 2021
- Arezo Osmani, President, SafePath Prosperity, Kabul, Afghanistan

12:00-1:00 PM - *Toscana B*
Lunch and networking

1:00-2:00 PM - Concurrent Breakout Panels
Panel 1: Mobilizing Canada and the International Community to Advocate for Vulnerable Groups and Afghan Women - *Mackenzie Room*
Moderator: Frishta Bastan, AYEDI Board
Panelists:

- Hon. Senator Salma Ataullahjan
- Mr. Gheyas Saadat, former professor in Afghanistan and current professor in Canada
- Zarqa Yaftali, Women and Children Legal Research Foundation
- Artemis Akbary, Executive Director, Afghan LGBTQ+ Organization

Panel 2: Afghan Resettlement in Canada - Challenges and Opportunities - *York Room*
Moderator: Adeena Niazi, AWO
Panelists:

- Lotfullah Najafizada, CEO of Amu TV
- Hassan Soroosh, Ambassador of Afghanistan to Canada
- Victoria Jahesh, Afghan Women's Centre of Montreal
- Sheba Yusufzai, Senior Consultant, Olympia Immigration, former CCAP Member

2:15-3:45 PM - *Mackenzie and York Rooms*
Design Thinking workshops: Innovate for Impact
Co-developing knowledge and solutions

3:45 PM - *Toscana B*
Afternoon Address by Garnett Genuis, MP for Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan
Shadow Minister of International Development

4:00-4:30 PM - *Mackenzie and York Rooms*
Translating Ideas into Action

4:30-5:00 PM - *Toscana B*
Closing remarks by AYEDI
Open networking and refreshments

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Guest Speakers

Salma Zahid, MP for Scarborough-Centre, Member of Special Committee on Afghanistan, Chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

Elected as the Member of Parliament for Scarborough Centre in 2015 and re-elected in 2019 and 2021, Salma Zahid is a committed champion for gender equality and a strong voice for the diverse families of Scarborough. Salma is Chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, and a member of the Special Committee on Afghanistan. In her work on the committee, she has worked to ensure the voices of racialized Canadians and visible minority women are heard and has advocated for improved customer service within the immigration system and for increased family reunification. As an MP, Salma has worked to raise awareness of the oppression of the Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar and other oppressed persons around the world and pressed the government to take a leadership role in providing humanitarian assistance. Her private member's motion M-155, designating June as Filipino Heritage Month across Canada, was unanimously passed by the House of Commons. Salma, her husband Salman, and their sons Umaid and Usman are proud and long-time residents of Scarborough.

Mr. Richard Bennett, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan

Mr. Bennett has served in Afghanistan on several occasions in different capacities including as the Chief of the Human Rights Service with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). He has previously played a role in the promotion and protection of human rights in Afghanistan and supported the United Nations on a number of human rights issues, such as the protection of civilians, transitional justice, child rights, rule of law, rights of people with disabilities, protection of human rights defenders and a range of economic, social and cultural rights. Mr. Bennett also served with the United Nations as the Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and head of the human rights components of peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, and South Sudan as well as twice in Afghanistan (2003-07 and 2018-19). He has been a long-term adviser to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. From mid-2019, he worked as a consultant on UN human rights assignments in Afghanistan, Myanmar and New York. Mr. Bennett is currently a visiting professor at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute in Lund, Sweden.

Garnett Genuis, MP for Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan, Shadow Minister of International Development, Vice-Chair of The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Garnett Genuis is the Member of Parliament for Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan. First elected to Parliament in 2015, MP Genuis is a long-time resident of Strathcona County. He has served in various roles in the Conservative Shadow Cabinet since 2019. Genuis is currently a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Immigration Committee. He previously served as the Vice-Chair of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations. Genius has been active on many high-profile domestic and international human rights issues. His interest in human rights was shaped by the experience of his grandmother, a Holocaust survivor. Genuis is also a passionate advocate for free speech, for increased efforts to combat violence against women, and for Canadian energy. He is the sponsor of Bill C-257, a bill to add "political belief and activity" to the Canadian Human Rights Act as prohibited grounds of discrimination, and Motion 57, a motion to promote bystander awareness and intervention training to combat violence. Genuis holds degrees from Carleton University and the London School of Economics.

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Plenary Panel Speakers

How Can Canada Support Afghan Women? Reflections on the past 2 years and Looking Ahead

Hon. Senator Marilou McPhedran, Moderator
The Honourable Marilou McPhedran is a human rights lawyer/educator/activist and Order of Canada Member. She was appointed an independent senator on the recommendation of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in November 2016. Recognized for her co-leadership in developing constitutional equality rights, she sponsored Bill S-201 to lower the federal voting age to 16, as well as Bill S-261, the "Can't Buy Silence Act" to stop misuse of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) by entities receiving federal funding. A top priority on her Senate agenda is engaging and facilitating contributions by diverse young leaders in Canadian parliamentary affairs and global multilateralism.

Hon. Maryam Monsef, P.C., Founder and CEO, Onward
Maryam Monsef is the founder and CEO of Onward, where she lends her skills as a public speaker and consultant to causes and leaders, she believes in. She is a new mom, and former Cabinet Minister and you can see her Monday nights on CTV's Power Play with Vassy Kapelos. Her life began as a refugee, leading her to community organizing and to Canada's Parliament, where she drove impact for social and economic justice files in Canada and around the world. Hear from Maryam on the role of businesses in driving social equity and how we can be champions for change. From her experience in Parliament, Maryam will connect the dots on how our efforts can create monumental shifts and the responsibilities we hold within these movements.

Freshta Hemmati, CEO, Afghanistan Journalists Support Organization (AJSO)
Freshta Hemmati is a distinguished journalist and women's rights activist from Afghanistan. She holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism from Afghanistan and a master's degree in Diplomacy from Kazakhstan. Having moved to Canada in August 2022, she now calls Charlottetown home. Freshta serves as the CEO of the Afghanistan Journalists Support Organization-AJSO and works as a Policy Analyst for the provincial government of Canada in P.E.I. Her commitment to journalism and women's rights advocacy makes her a remarkable professional who contributes significantly to society.

Nasrin Husseini, Canadian Hazara Humanitarian Services (CHHS), BBC Top 100 Women 2021
Nasrin Husseini is a refugee advocate and researcher at the University of Guelph. Husseini is among an annual list of 100 exceptional women published by the BBC. She was among the second class of women to graduate from Kabul University's veterinary medicine program — and finished at the top of her class. She enrolled at the University of Guelph soon after arriving in Toronto. Husseini earned a master of science in immunology and received the Arrell Scholarship; one of the most prestigious scholarships in the University of Guelph. She now works as a veterinary researcher for the university. As a volunteer, she works with the organization Canadian Hazara Humanitarian Services, a Brampton-based non-profit, which assists members of Afghanistan's Hazara ethnic group in settling in Canada, as well as with the Bookies Youth Program, which promotes literacy and storytelling for Afghan children.

Arezo Osmani, President, SafePath Prosperity, Kabul, Afghanistan
In 2019, Arezo Osmani co-founded Safe Path Prosperity, a sustainable social enterprise that specializes in producing Safepad - a reusable sanitary product designed by and for women in Afghanistan. The work creates dignified employment opportunities for socially and economically vulnerable women and girls while the product preserves dignity and builds confidence and leadership.

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Panel 1 Speakers

Mobilizing Canada and the International Community to Advocate for Vulnerable Groups and Afghan Women

Hon. Sen. Salma Ataullahjan

Salma Ataullahjan was appointed to the Canadian Senate in the summer of 2010 as a representative for Ontario. As the first Canadian Senator of Pakistani origin, she stands for the ethnic diversity of all Canadians. In the Senate, Senator Salma is Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Rights, and she is a member of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament. She is committed to issues affecting women, youth and the world's most vulnerable, having proposed several recognized studies in the Human Rights committee. Senator Salma is also Vice President of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), an international organization of parliamentarians from 159 countries. There, she is especially known as an advocate for maternal, newborn and child health. Because of this, she was named the IPU's Goodwill Ambassador for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

Mr. Gheyas Saadat, former university professor in Afghanistan and current professor in Canada

Gheyas Saadat is a Senior International Assistance Officer at Global Affairs Canada. He manages Canadian-funded development projects in the Middle East, specifically in Jordan. In the past, he oversaw funding to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, managed by the World Bank, focusing on stabilization and reconstruction in Afghanistan. Saadat has been responsible for diverse development projects in the areas of Human Rights, Women's Rights, Climate Change, and Humanitarian Assistance since 2015. Saadat's roles have included policy analyses, project design, and strategic advice for Global Affairs Canada's Development Assistance Programming in Afghanistan and Jordan. He worked as a Trade Commissioner at the Canadian Embassy in Afghanistan (2012-2015), promoting Canadian private sector interests in trade, investment, and infrastructure. He was a professor at Kardan University's MBA Department and an International Mentor for UNITAR. Saadat earned a second Master's Degree in Public Administration from the National University of Singapore (2019) with honors and leadership recognition. His first Master's Degree is in Business Administration from Kardan University of Afghanistan (2015), where he was a top student and received a Gold Medal from the Minister of Higher Education. He also holds a Diploma Certificate in Policy Analysis and Design from the University of Central Asia.

Zarqa Yaftali, Director of the Women and Children Legal Research Foundation (WCLRF)

Zarqa Yaftali is a peace builder and an advocate for women's and children rights, in Afghanistan. Since 2007, she has served as Executive Director of the Women and Children Legal Research Foundation (WCLRF), where she has conducted legal and field research in Afghanistan on the topic of violence and discrimination against women and girls, access to education, women participation in peace process as well as sexual harassment against women, access to justice, and property rights. In October 2020, on the occasion of the 20th-anniversary of UNSCR 1325, she was selected to represent civil society and brief at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security. Yaftali was member of the High Council for National Reconciliation. She is also member of various national and regional civil society organizations and advocacy groups. She is a fellow of the Women Peace maker fellowship in San Diego University.

Artemis Akbary

Artemis Akbary is an Afghan LGBTQ rights activist and the founder and executive director of Afghan LGBTQ+ Organisation (ALO), an international advocacy group dedicated to promoting the human rights of Afghan LGBTQI people and LGBTQI asylum seekers. He is a radio producer and presenter of Radio RanginKaman (Rainbow Radio), the first and only media outlet for Afghan and Iranian LGBTQI people.

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Panel 2 Speakers
Afghan Resettlement in Canada – Challenges and Opportunities

Adeena Niazi, Executive Director of AWO, Moderator
Formerly a lecturer at Kabul University, Afghanistan, Adeena Niazi arrived in Canada in 1988 as a refugee. In 1990, she founded the Afghan Women's Organization (AWO). Under her leadership, the organization has been active in supporting newcomer women and their families. The AWO, as one of only a few settlement agencies in Canada that are also a sponsorship agreement holder, has sponsored and successfully settled 1000s of refugees. Adeena has managed the AWO for over 27 years, first as president of the working board and then as Executive Director. She served as an elected member of the NGO/Government Committee on Private Sponsorship for 4 years and as a board member of organizations serving newcomer communities. Adeena is a strong and dedicated advocate for women and children in Afghanistan. In partnership with a group of prominent Canadian women, she founded the National Coalition in Support of Afghan Women and has advocated for the human rights of Afghan women at international conferences.

Lotfullah Najafizada, award-winning journalist and CEO of Amu TV
Lotfullah Najafizada is an Afghan journalist with Amu TV, an international media outlet for Afghanistan that he and his colleagues founded after the fall of Kabul in August 2021. Najafizada's nearly two decades of journalism experience include leading TOLOnews TV (2009-2021), where he led the largest news operation in the country for over a decade. He conducted many high-profile interviews with global leaders and hosted Afghanistan's only presidential debate in 2019. Among recognitions for his work, he won the Journalist of the Year Award by One Young World in 2022, Paris-based Reporters Without Borders awarded him with the prestigious medal of Press Freedom Hero in 2016, TIME Magazine profiled him as a Next Generation Global Leader in 2016 and Forbes magazine selected him among the 30 under 30 Asia influencers in media in 2017. He is a former fellow with the Institute of Politics, University of Chicago (2021-2022) Asia Society (2012), the Atlantic Council (2019), the Rumsfeld Foundation (2016), and the World Press Institute (2010). He has a BSc in Economics.

Hassan Soroosh, Ambassador of Afghanistan to Canada
Ambassador Hassan Soroosh has been in Ottawa since September 2019. He presented his credentials to Her Excellency the Right Honorable Julie Payette, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada on November 01, 2019, accrediting him as Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Canada. Ambassador Soroosh has more than 20 years of experience with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and has served in different capacities. Under his previous positions, Ambassador Soroosh has led the Secretariat for the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) which remains a prominent Afghanistan-focused regional cooperation platform. Ambassador Soroosh has represented Afghanistan at various bilateral, trilateral and regional working committees, commissions, and meetings.

Victoria Jahesh, Executive Director, Afghan Women's Centre of Montreal
Victoria's profound impact at the Afghan Women's Centre of Montreal (AWCM) is marked by her unwavering commitment to advocacy and empowerment. As the Executive Director, she has championed social justice, women's rights, and gender empowerment. Under Victoria's guidance, AWCM has become a beacon of support for vulnerable and marginalized women, offering programs and resources that address their unique needs. Her innovative approach to healthcare information dissemination has ensured that the community, especially newly arrived individuals, can access crucial knowledge in a language they understand, transcending language barriers for better health outcomes. Victoria's advocacy extends beyond the confines of the centre, with her active participation in conferences and panel discussions shedding light on the challenges faced by Afghan women.

Sheba Yusufzai, Senior Consultant at Olympia Immigration
Sheba Yusufzai is a Senior Immigration Consultant at Olympia Immigration. She is a former member of the Canadian Campaign for Afghan Peace, where she actively advised and aided efforts to mobilize Canadians to urge Canada to act quickly during the Afghanistan crisis. Sheba brings experience in immigration laws and regulations particularly pertaining to refugees in the political, public, and private sectors.