

# WATAN E MA | OUR HOMELAND

## WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN KEEPING THE FLAME OF FREEDOM ALIVE

AN INTERACTIVE EVENT AND EXHIBIT HONORING THE RESILIENCE OF  
AFGHAN WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS

WHEN: MARCH 17, 2025 | 15:00-21:00

WHERE: BLUE GALLERY, NEW YORK CITY

The International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) invites you to join us and our partners for an evening to honor and recognize the enduring strength of Afghan women. Join us for an immersive experience of culture, resistance, and solidarity.

Coinciding with Nowruz—the Persian New Year celebration of renewal and hope, which Afghans are currently banned from celebrating in Afghanistan—the event will center Afghan women peacebuilders' courage and resistance as they continue their unyielding pursuit of a new day of peace, freedom, and equality for all Afghans.

Through cultural celebration, a teach-in, an art exhibit, a documentary screening, and storytelling, we will not only bear witness to their struggles but also honor their leadership and unwavering determination to shape a brighter future for Afghanistan.

## WHY THIS EVENT MATTERS

The Taliban's crackdowns against women and girls are becoming more vitriolic and barbaric. We're holding this event to honor the defiance and resilience of Afghans. To remind that Afghan culture is rooted in an ancient civilization that established coexistence and pluralism as norms; that positioned women equally and with dignity in society.

Supporting Afghan women's initiatives is not only an act of solidarity but also a strategic investment in peace and resilience. Their voices must be heard and amplified to ensure Afghanistan's future is not defined by its oppressors, but by its people—especially its women.

The event will be held alongside the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) at the United Nations, which has a focus on the legacy and progress of the Beijing Platform for Action, 30 years later. This examination of the journey of Afghan women peacebuilders will be both poignant and a salient contribution to that moment.

Afghan women carry the heavy burden of their nation's shattered dreams while kindling the flames of resistance and hope. This event is a rallying cry to stand with them in their fight for justice and dignity.

Let us **honor** their courage, **invest** in their vision, and **ensure their voices shape the future of Afghanistan.**



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Cultural Celebration:** Experience Afghanistan's rich heritage and celebrate the persistence of its diverse culture in the present through sensory immersion featuring music, poetry readings, dance, perfume, tea, and cuisine.
- **Art Exhibit:** Explore a gallery of mixed-media artwork by Afghan women artists. The exhibit will feature visual arts produced through peacebuilding initiatives such as illustrations, poetry, and embroidery. The exhibit will be made accessible following the event through installation at supporting institutions and will be hosted in parallel on a virtual platform.
- **Teach-In:** Engage with Afghan women leaders as they share their strategies on how to persist, keeping their work and the spirit of resistance alive while working under total repression. In these sessions, we will learn about their approaches to community peacebuilding, sustaining livelihoods, engaging men, addressing security, supporting mental health, and navigating women's leadership in the current context.
- **Launch of Case Studies:** Further exploring the above themes, ICAN has developed a set of case studies documenting the legacy of Afghan women peacebuilders, analyzing their strategies, and illustrating the impact of their ongoing efforts. The event will mark their publication, with print editions available to event attendees.
- **Documentary Screening:** Witness the impact through the resilience of Afghan women peacebuilders in Afghanistan through a moving short film made by Kaaj, a media organization comprised of Afghan women journalists and documentarians.

## GOALS

- **Honor Resilience:** Showcase and recognize the achievements of Afghan women peacebuilders and leaders navigating one of the world's most challenging contexts as gender apartheid becomes further entrenched. Reflecting on the impact of their cumulative and ongoing work, we will illustrate their incredible persistence, and the case for hope.
- **Inspire Action and Solidarity:** Urge stakeholders—funders, diplomats, and other relevant stakeholders—to sustain political and financial support for women-led organizations and initiatives inside and outside Afghanistan. By communicating both the realities and possibilities of women-led peacebuilding in the current context in Afghanistan, we aim to encourage international allies to meet the spirit and determination of Afghan women peacebuilders.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

<https://icanpeacework.org/2025/02/watan-e-ma-our-homeland/>

### This Winter Will Also Pass

O coldness of winter,  
Within you, thousands of springs lie hidden.  
The fire of love, within the ice,  
Will create the warmth of life.  
Be patient, O soul,  
For beyond this long night,  
The light of dawn waits for you.

~ Rumi

### این زمستان نیز خواهد گذشت

ای سردی زمستان،  
در دل تو هزاران بهار نهفته است  
آتش عشق، در دل یخ  
گرمای زندگی خواهد آفرید  
صبر کن، ای جان،  
که در پیس این شب طولانی  
نور صبح، چشم به راه توست

~ مولانا جلال الدین رومی



## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



## WITH SUPPORT FROM:



## IN COLLABORATION WITH:

