



Unbroken Voices

Solidarity, Trust-Building Strategy and the Path Forward

12 June 2026

Oslo, Norway

ORGANIZED BY

Afghan Women Coordination Umbrella (AWCU)

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

WILPF Geneva, PEN Norway, Dialogue Hub for Common Ground Women's Justice Movement and Tabasoom Cultural Association

Conference at a Glance

Conference title	Unbroken Voices: Solidarity, Trust-Building Strategy and the Path Forward
Date	12 June 2026
Location	Oslo, Norway
Format	One-day, in-person conference
Organized by	Afghan Women Coordination Umbrella (AWCU)
Partners	Dialogue Hub for Common Ground; PEN Norway
Participants	21 participants (20 women and 1 man)

Executive Summary

On 12 June 2026, the Afghan Women Coordination Umbrella (AWCU) convened a one-day conference in Oslo, Norway, under the title *“Unbroken Voices: Solidarity, Trust-Building Strategy and the Path Forward.”* Organized in partnership with WILPF Geneva, Dialogue Hub for Common Ground, and PEN Norway, the conference brought together 21 participants (20 women and 1 man) representing diverse generations, ethnic backgrounds, professional experiences, and political perspectives from across the Afghan diaspora. The event served as a platform to strengthen collaboration, solidarity, and collective advocacy for Afghan women. Representatives from AWCU, the Women's Justice Movement, led by Hoda Khamosh, and Dialogue Hub for Common Ground presented their work and engaged participants in discussions on women's rights, political participation, movement-building, and diaspora coordination. The Tabasoom Cultural Association also showcased its initiatives to preserve Afghan cultural heritage and strengthen community cohesion among the Afghan diaspora in Norway, underscoring the importance of partnerships in advancing advocacy, civic engagement, and cultural preservation.

The conference was designed not as a series of speeches to be received passively, but as a participatory space for dialogue, reflection, trust-building, and collective advocacy on behalf of Afghan women and girls. Following a set of opening reflections and keynote presentations, participants worked in four facilitated groups to define what solidarity means today, to identify practical strategies for strengthening it, to map the challenges confronting Afghan women and civil society, and to set out principles for rebuilding trust among women activists, organizations, network, coalitions and platforms.

The discussions produced a clear and practical roadmap for the period of 2026-2027. Participants reached broad consensus that sustainable advocacy depends on trust, solidarity, inclusive leadership, and coordinated action from a feminist perspective, and that the voices of women inside Afghanistan must remain central to all of it. The conference also generated immediate, concrete results: a dedicated WhatsApp coordination group established on the day, agreement to hold monthly online coordination meetings, a set of shared advocacy priorities, and perhaps most importantly markedly strengthened relationships among participants who rarely have the opportunity to meet across generational, political, and organizational lines.

Background and Context

The conference responded to an urgent need to strengthen cooperation among Afghan women-led organizations and to reconnect the diaspora with women still inside Afghanistan. Years of conflict, displacement, political polarization, and forced migration have strained the relationships that hold Afghan communities together, while the operating environment for advocacy has grown steadily harder.

Civic space in Afghanistan continues to contract as the Taliban impose increasingly severe restrictions on the rights, freedoms, and public participation of women and girls. At the same time, international attention to Afghanistan is steadily declining, and parts of the international community are gradually moving toward normalizing engagement with the Taliban authorities, despite the absence of any meaningful improvement in the human rights situation particularly the systematic denial of women's and girls' fundamental rights. Meanwhile, funding available to Afghan civil society organizations has fallen sharply, further limiting the capacity of women's rights organizations and grassroots initiatives to sustain their work.

Against this backdrop, individuals, activists, and organizations working toward shared goals too often operate in isolation considering only the need of their organization or their personal agenda, with limited communication and, at times, competition over increasingly scarce resources. These challenges risk weakening the collective capacity of the women's movement at a time when unity and strategic collaboration are needed most.

AWCU convened this gathering based on the conviction that, under these circumstances, solidarity, trust-building, and strategic coordination are not optional they are essential. Rebuilding a resilient and effective movement for women's rights, peace, justice, and democratic values requires collective action, mutual support, and a shared commitment to strengthening collaboration across diverse actors, generations, and initiatives. By creating space for dialogue, joint reflection, and relationship-building, the gathering sought to reinforce the foundations of a coordinated movement capable of sustaining advocacy for Afghan women and girls during one of the most challenging periods in the country's recent history.

Conference Objectives

The conference pursued five connected objectives:

- Strengthen solidarity and trust among Afghan women and their organizations.
- Promote inclusive dialogue across generations, backgrounds, and perspectives and their perspective towards sustainable solution for Afghanistan.
- Enhance coordination among Afghan women-led organizations inside Afghanistan and across the diaspora.
- Develop joint advocacy priorities grounded in shared analysis, experience and demands of women living under the DFA.
- Support sustainable, long-term movement-building by prioritizing the needs, demands, and leadership of women living inside Afghanistan, ensuring that advocacy strategies and collective actions remain grounded in their lived realities, priorities, and aspirations.

Conference Proceedings

Negina Yari opened the day with sharing the goal and objectives of the event, introduction and a reflection session titled “What Do You Remember from Afghanistan?” Participants shared personal memories of home, an exercise that fostered empathy and laid an early foundation of mutual trust for the conversations to follow. By beginning with lived experience rather than formal agendas, the session set a tone of openness that carried through the rest of the day. Keynote presentations followed, delivered by Jamila Afghani, Palwasha Kakar Core Group Members of AWCU, The Key Guest Presenters Huda Khamosh from (WJM) Organization, Nazifa Jalali Director of the Dialogue Hub for Common Ground, and Farida Rajab from Tabasoom Cultural Association Presented their Organization. The presentations situated the day’s discussions within the wider context of Afghan women’s rights, cultural expression, and advocacy, and framed the central questions that the working groups would take up in greater depth.

Participants then moved into four facilitated working groups, each addressing a distinct dimension of the conference theme: solidarity, strategies for strengthening it, the challenges facing Afghan women and civil society, and the rebuilding of trust.

Group Work Sessions

The group discussions formed the heart of the conference. Rather than relying on traditional panel discussions in which only a few voices dominate while others remain passive listeners, the conference was intentionally designed as a participatory process that encouraged meaningful engagement from every participant. Each session created space for women to contribute their perspectives, share lived experiences, exchange lessons learned and collectively develop practical recommendations for strengthening the Afghan women's movement. The four facilitated working groups were led by AWCU

representatives and structured to promote dialogue, collective analysis, and joint problem-solving rather than one-way presentations.

The participants themselves were the conference's greatest strength. They brought together Afghan women from diverse generations, professional backgrounds, and lived experiences, including women who had been in exile for more than four decades, recently displaced women human rights defenders, researchers, civil society leaders, peacebuilders, activists, and members of the Afghan diaspora living in Oslo and surrounding cities. This diversity enriched the discussions by bringing together multiple perspectives, experiences, and expertise while fostering a shared understanding of the challenges facing Afghan women and the movement as a whole.

Facilitators created an environment that promoted respectful dialogue, equal participation, and collective reflection. Participants responded with remarkable openness, sharing personal experiences, organizational lessons, advocacy strategies, and concerns about the worsening situation for women and girls inside Afghanistan. While acknowledging differences in experiences, political perspectives, and organizational approaches, participants consistently emphasized the importance of finding common ground and strengthening collective action.

Despite these differences, participants demonstrated a strong and shared commitment to advancing the rights of Afghan women and girls, promoting inclusive and accountable leadership, and rebuilding trust and solidarity across Afghan communities and civil society. The discussions reflected a common recognition that the current context requires greater collaboration, stronger coordination, and a renewed commitment to placing the priorities and voices of women inside Afghanistan at the center of advocacy efforts. The following four sections summarize the key discussions, recommendations, and conclusions emerging from each working group.

Working Group One — Understanding Solidarity

The first group took up a single foundational question: what does solidarity mean for Afghan women today? Participants agreed that solidarity is far more than symbolic support or occasional cooperation. They described it instead as a continuous commitment to working together despite political, ethnic, ideological, linguistic, religious, regional, and generational differences with diversity understood as a source of strength rather than division.

Many reflected on how years of conflict, displacement, polarization, and forced migration have weakened relationships among Afghan communities, and acknowledged that rebuilding solidarity means addressing mistrust and creating spaces where people feel respected and heard. Solidarity, they agreed, begins with recognizing the dignity of every individual regardless of political opinion, ethnicity, organizational affiliation, age, or educational background. In concrete terms, the group concluded that solidarity rests on:

- Mutual respect and active listening
- Equality, inclusion, and empathy
- Transparency
- Shared leadership and collective responsibility

Participants stressed that Afghan women possess enormous collective knowledge and experience, but that this potential can only translate into impact if organizations move beyond individual agendas and invest in long-term cooperation. As one participant put it, solidarity is not created through statements or declarations, but through everyday actions, mutual support, and consistent collaboration.

Working Group Two — Strategies for Strengthening Solidarity

Building on the first discussion, the second group examined how solidarity might be turned into durable, working cooperation. Participants observed that many organizations already pursue similar objectives but operate independently, with little communication or coordination. The group therefore focused on practical mechanisms to strengthen collaboration among Afghan women-led organizations, both inside Afghanistan and across the diaspora.

A central recommendation was to organize regular dialogue forums where women from different backgrounds could exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and jointly develop advocacy priorities. Participants emphasized continuous communication and stronger networking so that organizations could share information, avoid duplicating one another's work, and identify opportunities for joint initiatives. The group also called for sustained investment in leadership, particularly for young Afghan women, through:

- Leadership training programmes
- Capacity-building workshops
- Mentorship opportunities
- Knowledge-sharing sessions
- Intergenerational dialogue

Participants also turned to the responsible use of social media. Digital platforms, they noted, have become powerful advocacy tools but can equally spread misinformation and deepen division; organizations should therefore use them strategically to promote accurate information, amplify Afghan women's voices, strengthen advocacy campaigns, and encourage constructive dialogue. The group concluded that solidarity is best understood not as an emotional value alone but as an operational strategy — one that requires continuous investment, communication, transparency, and institutional cooperation.

Working Group Three — Identifying Challenges Facing Afghan Women and Civil Society

The third group carried out a frank assessment of the challenges confronting Afghan women, civil society organizations, and advocacy movements. Participants identified a dense web of interconnected difficulties, among them:

- Weak trust between organizations and fragmented advocacy
- Political polarization and ethnic divisions
- Economic hardship, increasing poverty, and unemployment
- Forced displacement and shrinking civic space

- Human rights violations and systematic discrimination against women and girls
- Limited opportunities for meaningful participation
- Declining international attention and significant reductions in funding for Afghan civil society

Participants noted that many organizations continue to work in isolation because opportunities for coordination remain scarce, and that competition over limited resources has at times strained relationships among them. Sustainable advocacy, the group stressed, cannot succeed when organizations operate alone; future efforts should instead prioritize coalition-building, resource-sharing, coordinated messaging, and collective planning.

A further concern ran through the discussion: the importance of maintaining direct communication with women inside Afghanistan. Participants emphasized that international advocacy must remain informed by the lived experiences and priorities of women on the ground, warning that, without these connections, advocacy risks becoming detached from the realities it seeks to change.

Working Group Four — Trust-Building and the Path Forward

The final group concentrated on one of the conference's central themes: how trust can be rebuilt among Afghan women and their organizations. Participants agreed that trust is the foundation of any successful movement, but also that it cannot be restored quickly. Trust develops gradually, through consistent action, transparency, accountability, respectful communication, and shared responsibility. The discussion crystallized around five principles.

Acceptance and Inclusion

Diversity should be accepted and space made for different voices, rather than excluding people on the basis of political, ethnic, ideological, or organizational difference.

Dialogue Instead of Confrontation

Disagreements should be treated as opportunities for dialogue and learning rather than as occasions for conflict.

Mutual Support

Organizations should share opportunities, expertise, resources, and networks with one another instead of competing.

Respect and Accountability

Building trust requires honesty, transparency, respect, and accountability in both personal and organizational relationships.

Shared Responsibility

Strengthening Afghan women's movements requires collective ownership, in which every individual and organization contributes toward common goals. Future cooperation, the group concluded, should be built on partnership rather than competition.

Cross-Cutting Analysis

Although each group addressed a different question, several priorities emerged consistently across all four. Participants repeatedly emphasized that strengthening solidarity requires continuous dialogue rather than one-time events, and that trust-building is an ongoing process resting on transparency, accountability, inclusion, and shared leadership. A second recurring theme was the need to deepen cooperation among Afghan women-led organizations while strengthening the connection between women inside Afghanistan and the diaspora. Intergenerational cooperation featured prominently: participants agreed that experienced leaders hold valuable institutional knowledge, while younger generations bring innovation, energy, and new advocacy approaches and that bringing the two together will strengthen the movements to come. Across every discussion, participants insisted that advocacy remain coordinated, evidence-based, and informed directly by Afghan women living inside the country.

Key Outcomes

The group work translated directly into concrete results:

- A dedicated WhatsApp coordination group was established immediately following the conference to enable continuous exchange among participants.
- Participants agreed to hold monthly virtual meetings to share updates, identify advocacy opportunities, coordinate campaigns, and strengthen partnerships.
- Stronger networking and relationships were built among participants across generations, perspectives, and organizations.
- Shared advocacy priorities were identified to guide collective action.
- Participants committed to maintaining direct links with women inside Afghanistan.
- Participants committed to coalition-building and collective action over independent, fragmented effort.

Beyond these formal commitments, many participants observed that the conference offered one of the few opportunities they have had to engage in respectful dialogue across different generations, political perspectives, organizational affiliations, and lived experiences. These newly built relationships are themselves among the conference's most important achievements and provide a strong foundation for future collaboration.

Lessons Learned

“Meaningful dialogue conducted in a safe, inclusive, and peaceful environment strengthens trust, foster solidarity, reduces fragmentation and discrimination, and creates practical pathways for collective leadership, collaboration, and coordinated advocacy. When participants were provided with the space to speak openly, listen to one another as equals, and engage with mutual respect, differences that might otherwise have divided them became opportunities for learning, deeper understanding, and the identification of shared priorities. The conference demonstrated that fostering dialogue across diverse experiences and perspectives is essential for rebuilding solidarity and strengthening a resilient, inclusive movement capable of advancing the rights of Afghan women and girls.”

Recommendations

To build on the momentum of the conference, AWCU and its partners should:

- Continue holding regular consultation and coordination meetings to sustain communication and momentum.
- Expand partnerships among Afghan women-led organizations inside Afghanistan and across the diaspora.
- Invest in leadership development, with particular attention to young women and intergenerational mentorship.
- Document and regularly update joint advocacy priorities so that messaging stays coordinated and evidence-based.
- Strengthen international engagement while ensuring that the voices of Afghan women remain central to it.
- Use social media responsibly and strategically to amplify accurate information and constructive dialogue.

Conclusion

The group work sessions were the heart of the conference, and their spirit defined the day. Rather than dwelling solely on challenges, participants worked together to develop practical solutions, to strengthen personal and professional relationships, and to establish concrete mechanisms for continued cooperation. The discussions demonstrated that Afghan women retain remarkable resilience, expertise, and commitment despite unprecedented political, social, and financial pressures. The recommendations generated across the working groups offer a practical roadmap for strengthening solidarity, rebuilding trust, improving coordination, and expanding collective advocacy. These outcomes will guide the future work of the Afghan Women Coordination Umbrella and its partners, and contribute to a stronger, more inclusive, and more sustainable Afghan women’s movement one capable of amplifying the voices of Afghan women both inside Afghanistan and across the diaspora.