

# ONE STRUGGLE, MANY MOVEMENTS: THE OPPOSITION TO THE TALIBAN TYRANNY IN AFGHANISTAN

## **Background:**

Under the Taliban's oppressive rule, Afghanistan and its citizens—particularly women and girls—are enduring unspeakable suffering. Over the past three years, Taliban rule has only deepened the country's political, social, economic, and humanitarian crises. Despite repeated efforts, the international community has failed to persuade the Taliban to alter their oppressive policies. Instead, the group has continuously imposed draconian restrictions, with women and girls being their primary targets.

At the international level, recent developments at the International Criminal Court offer a glimmer of hope. Meanwhile, opposition to the Taliban is growing both inside and outside Afghanistan. As part of these efforts, one of the most promising initiatives brings together a broad coalition of opposition groups at the 5th Round of the Vienna Conference for a Democratic Afghanistan, overseen by the Austrian Institute for International Affairs (OIIP).

To amplify the voices of opposition groups and deepen understanding of their efforts and the current situation in Afghanistan, we are organizing a panel discussion featuring leading figures in the struggle for Afghanistan's liberation. Through this event, we aim to contribute to efforts toward meaningful political change—ensuring respect for human rights, the rule of law, and the (re)establishment of a stable democracy.

This event presents a unique opportunity for policymakers, academics, diplomats, human rights advocates, and the public to gain valuable insights from experts and individuals at the forefront of Afghanistan's resistance. The discussion will explore key perspectives on resistance efforts, legal avenues for accountability, and the path toward a democratic Afghanistan.

# Event Details

**Venue:** Diplomatische Akademie Wien, Favoritenstrasse 15a, 1040 Vienna

**Date:** Wednesday, February 19, 2025

**Time:** 18:30 – 21:00 h

Registration required to participate at the venue via <https://www.da-vienna.ac.at/events>

**Live stream:** <https://www.da-vienna.ac.at/live>

## **Opening Remarks:**

Martina Schubert (Deputy Director, Vienna School of International Studies)

## **Keynote Speech:**

H.E. Manizha Bakhtari (Afghanistan's Ambassador to Austria)

**Panel Discussion:** Strategies of Resistance Against the Taliban

**Moderator:** Edit Schlaffer

## **Panelists & Topics:**

International Efforts & the Vienna Process for a Democratic Afghanistan – **Fawzia Koofi**

Political Opposition and Armed Resistance – **Abdullah Khenjani**

Legal & Diplomatic Measures Against the Taliban – **Nazifa Haqqal**

Naan, Kaar, Azadi Movement – **Parwana Ibrahimkhail Nejrabi**

Perspectives from Afghanistan's Diaspora & Civil Society – **Mansoor Hussein Ayobi**

## **Q&A Session**

Open floor for questions from the audience

Closing Remarks followed by Networking & Informal Discussions



Martina  
Schubert

**Martina Schubert** is an Austrian diplomat and Minister Plenipotentiary. She is the Deputy Director of the Vienna School of International Studies and has served as Deputy Head of Mission of Austria to NATO. She was the Presidency Coordinator of Austria's EU Council Presidency and has held key positions at the Austrian Permanent Representation to the EU, the European Commission, and OMV AG. Schubert holds a law degree from the University of Salzburg and a Master's in Advanced European Political and Administrative Studies from the College of Europe in Bruges. She is the mother of three adult children.



Manizha  
Bakhtari

**H.E. Manizha Bakhtari** is a diplomat, lecturer, and author. She was formerly Afghanistan's Ambassador to Nordic Countries. Prior to her diplomatic career, Ms. Bakhtari was renowned for her work on gender advocacy in the non-profit sector. Ms. Bakhtari received her bachelor's degree in Journalism from Kabul University and her master's degree from the university's Persian Literature Department. She later served as a lecturer at her alma mater. Ms. Bakhtari has published hundreds of academic and journalistic articles, as well as academic books. Ms. Bakhtari also writes fiction. Her short stories are often centered around the experiences of women and the socio-cultural dynamics of the Afghan society.

# Panelists



Fawzia Koofi

**Fawzia Koofi** is a politician, women's rights advocate, and former Deputy Speaker of Parliament from Afghanistan. As one of the few women in the 2020 Doha peace talks with the Taliban, she fought for women's rights and democracy. A survivor of multiple assassination attempts, she remains a vocal critic of the Taliban. In 2020, she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts in peacebuilding and gender equality.

Despite exile, she remains deeply engaged in Afghan politics, working with opposition groups and resistance movements to restore democracy. Her courage and leadership make her one of the most influential figures in Afghanistan's modern struggle for freedom and equality.



Abdullah  
Khenjani

**Abdullah Khenjani** is the Head of the Political Office for the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan, where he plays a pivotal role in shaping the political landscape of his country. Previously, he served as the Senior Deputy Minister for Peace within the State Ministry for Peace, contributing significantly to peace-building efforts during a critical period in Afghanistan's history. With nearly a decade of experience as a journalist, Abdullah has honed his skills in communication and analysis, bringing a unique perspective to his current political endeavors. His dedication to promoting stability and governance in Afghanistan reflects his commitment to the nation's future.



Nazifa  
Haqpal

**Nazifa Haqpal** is a former Afghan diplomat, served at the Afghanistan Embassy in London. Prior to this, she was head of the USA Desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. She has also worked with international organizations including UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) and Action Aid International. She received her master's degree in international security and diplomacy from the University of East Anglia, United Kingdom, and a BA in political science and law from Kabul University, Afghanistan. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate at SOAS University of London.



Parwana  
Ibrahimkhail  
Nijrabi

**Parwana Ibrahimkhail Nijrabi** is a human rights activist, founder of the Women's Movement for Peace and Freedom, and former Taliban prisoner in Kabul.

She is one of the few civil society figures in Afghanistan who has been actively fighting for justice and equality since 2017. She is among the first women to protest against the Taliban's apartheid regime in the streets of Kabul challenging the regime's gender-based persecutions. Despite enduring imprisonment and torture, she remains committed to her struggle. She is now in exile and lives in Germany.



Mansoor  
Hussein  
Ayobi

**Mansoor Hussein Ayobi** holds a master's in advanced international studies (M.A.I.S.) from the Vienna School of International Studies, serves as Vice-President of the Solidarity Group Afghanistan. In addition to his civic engagement supporting refugees in Austria, he has been highly active in organizing secret home-schooling groups in Afghanistan through the Solidarity Group Afghanistan. He has written his master's thesis on the UNSC's response to serious violations of women's rights by the Taliban 2.0 regime in Afghanistan.



Edit  
Schlaffer

## Moderator

**Edit Schlaffer**, a social scientist and trained psychoanalyst, founded WwB in 2001 with a view to building up the competence and confidence of women to effect positive social change in countries of crisis and transition around the world. She focuses on gender-based peacebuilding strategies that harness the strength of civil society in building a new security architecture from the bottom up. She is also honored with numerous awards for her efforts.

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