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A REPORT ON

# FIRST WOMEN AMAN JIRGA IN PAKISTAN

SUBMITTED BY

WOMEN & CHILDREN AFFAIRS' SECTION OF

AGHE آگہی

ASSOCIATION OF GLOBAL HUMANISTS AND ETHICS

Northern Areas of Pakistan

## FIRST WOMEN AMAN JIRGA (PEACE COMMITTEE) IN PAKISTAN

### Introduction

The chronic issue of sectarian violence in the *Northern Areas of Pakistan* has caused hundreds of lives since 1988. The situation of violence became worst since the beginning of 2005. The law and order circumstances remained uncertain and uncontrollable for the whole year but due to continue efforts of GRAND AMAN JIRGA (Grand Peace Council or Committee) of the region, efforts regarding peace seem successful. The Grand Aman Jirga approved number of proposals and took many bold steps to maintain law and order situation and peace in the area like unlocking the sealed Mosques of both Sunni and Shia communities and to release all people detained under the maintenance of public order (MPO), monitoring the activities of mosques to prevent misuse of religious places in terms of terror or political activities, recommendations for compensation of victims of the sectarian killings etc.

One of the significant proposals which was approved by the AMAN JIRGA is to establish WOMEN AMAN (PEACE) JIRGA separately but as a part and under umbrella of the Grand Aman Jirga. It is very interesting point to note that it is first time in the history of Northern Areas and even in Pakistan; it happened that a Women Jirga was established. This happened after a long and terrible struggle of women rights' activists and due to on going efforts of NGOs working for women rights and uplifting their social status. It is really a positive indicator of progressive thinking and change that Women's role has been recognized and women of the region will be able play their significant role more independently for development of the region and especially for peace building and peace keeping in the Northern Areas of Pakistan.

How did the Concept of Women Aman Jirga (peace committee) come into being in the North?

## Background

Majority of women in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, like other parts of the country, are playing their traditional role in the society which comprises domestic work like cooking, washing, cleaning, child rearing, collecting fuel wood, water and over all family maintenance. Mostly they are involved in agricultural activities such as cultivation, sowing, weeding, harvesting, fruit picking, rearing of cattle, poultry breeding etc. Their daily workload is heavier than that of men, but their work is invisible, poorly counted, and unacknowledged due to socio-cultural and religious conditions.

Northern Areas is considered as a conservative society in terms of women status and development where women involvement in the development activities is very little because women are expected to rigorously follow the cultural traditions. Some areas of the region are so conservative where the concept of a self sustained woman is unheard of, perhaps even challenged at times.

Establishing a Women Aman Jirga (Peace Committee) was not a simple task. The idea faced opposition from many hard liners (traditionalists). It is regarded as a great achievement of members (especially female) and volunteers of a Northern Areas' based NGO name; Association of Global Humanists and Ethics (AGHE) that the concept of female participation in peace building process was first time initiated and practically followed by them. The Association has also played its leading role in organizing a peace rally when nobody was ready to come out and speak up against the violence, a seminar was conducted under the theme "Role of Women in Peace Building" for more details please visit: <http://www.aghepakistan.org/activities2005.htm#Seminar> (Report of the Seminar is also available on your request to [info@aghepakistan.org](mailto:info@aghepakistan.org)), a women delegation of AGHE presented their recommendations to the head AMAN JIRGA

and Speaker Northern Areas Legislative Council Malik Maskin to engage women in the peace building process, high government officials and policy makers like Chief Executive Northern Areas and Federal Minister of Kashmir affairs, Chief and Home Secretaries of NAs, and other high officials of NAs administration, were approached, convinced and were provided them a proposed action plan, the seminar's results and recommendations ([details are available in the seminar's report](#)) to assure women participation in the peace process, to make the public opinion, articles regarding women participation in the peace building process were written and published in the local newspapers, women committees at grassroots (Mohalla) level were formed and functionalized. It is also great success of AGHE that the head Aman Jirga and speaker Northern Areas Legislative council Malik M. Maskin assigned the task to the association to identify and nominate notable women for the Women Aman Jirga. It was really great matter of proud and honour for the association to be assigned and trusted for such a sensitive and crucial task. So women and children affairs' section of AGHE successfully completed the assignment and after having due consent from the women, AGHE nominated twenty women for the Women Aman Jirga and then it became possible for the GRAND AMNA JIRGA to make the historical decision of founding the **WOMEN AMAN JIRGA**.

### **Future Perspectives of Women Aman Jirga**

The Women Aman Jirga is consist of 40 women of the region representing all the communities, sects and Districts. The Women Jirga will not only participate in peace building or peace keeping activities but the Jirga (committee) will also address other issues related to the women of the region. Women of the Northern Areas now have more opportunities for economic and social benefits through various activities and interventions with the WOMEN AMAN JIRGA, thus making a large contribution.

Establishment of first Women Peace Jirga in the Northern Areas of Pakistan can be model for other regions of the country and even this idea can be replicated in the other traditional societies of the world. Aman Jirga of Women could

become a representative forum or assembly of the women where they can share knowledge, experiences, information, collective thinking and issues. The Women Jirga can serve women by fostering partnership, enhancing pluralism, positive engagement to improve the lives of women in the region.

### **Acknowledgement**

It will be appropriate to acknowledge all the stakeholders who played their role in actualization of the dream of Women Aman Jirga. The head of Grand Aman Jirga Malik Maskin who played his pivotal role in making the historical decision, encouraging the female members of AGHE to work in peace building process and providing them guidelines, great tributes to all the respectable members of Grand Aman Jirga and the Government official; Chief Secretary NAs, Home Secretary NAs, Deputy Commissioner Gilgit, Assistant Commissioner Gilgit who provided logistical and governmental support to the Jirga and many thanks to all the journalists of local newspapers for their media coverage, setting ground for the Grand Aman Jirga to decide about and making public opinions supportive for first Women Jirga. Our heartiest gratitude to all those women who participated in the movement of mobilization of women for peace of region and deepest compliments to all the members and volunteers of Association of Global Humanists and Ethics for their bold and sincere efforts in the whole peace building process and advocating the women participation in peace process in all platforms and forums.

**Report By:**

**Women and Children Affairs section**

**Association of Global Humanists and Ethics**

**Northern Areas Pakistan**

## The Historical News of Establishment of First Women Aman Jirga in Pakistan



### Our Belief

We believe in humanity. We also believe that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

### Our Motto

Our country is the world, our religion is to do good

### Our Manifesto

Our Manifesto is to struggle for implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was accepted by all the member states of United Nations.

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