



A Comprehensive Composite Roadmap to build a Legitimate, Pluralistic, and Stable System in Afghanistan

Introduction

The **Comprehensive Composite Roadmap** (hereafter, **CCR**) is developed within the framework of the *Cambridge Afghanistan Series* (CAS), an annual conference at the University of Cambridge, by a Working Group comprising civil society and political groups, experts, and academics. The *Mosaic Global Foundation* facilitates both CAS and the CCR Working Group. This text synthesises twenty roadmaps and proposals from political and civil society groups, including several from within the country, for Afghanistan's future.¹ This synthesis emerges from the convergence of these initiatives, with approximately 90% overlap in core concepts, making it an *overlapping consensus* document.² The key areas of differences have been narrowed down to a few core national issues, around which an **open and frank dialogue** was initiated at CAS-IV-2025, between diverse stakeholders, and is set to continue through CAS-V-2026 and beyond.

¹ For details on these twenty roadmaps and proposals please read the report on Mosaic Global Foundation's website, which will be made available soon: <https://mosaicfoundation.global/>

² The synthesis of political roadmaps and the establishment of the CCR Working Group originated in the CAS-III-2024 dialogue, where six major currents presented their visions for Afghanistan. This process revealed substantial common ground, leading Mosaic to commission an independent evaluation of the proposals. For the full assessment, see: David Loyn, "The potential 'roadmaps' for return to constitutional government in Afghanistan", *Mosaic Global Foundation*, 20 December 2025, available at: <https://mosaicfoundation.global/90/the-potential-roadmaps-for-return-to-constitutional-government-in-afghanistan>

The CCR is founded on three key values:

- I. The people of Afghanistan need a government chosen by them, not by a self-appointed individual who has weaponised religion.
- II. Respect for Human Rights.
- III. Equality, including gender equality.

It is a dynamic, living document open to the inclusion of other proposals, as long as they subscribe to these three core values.

What is needed is a transformation, or rather a **paradigm shift**, which targets the historical roots of conflict. This process seeks to break repeated cycles of violence and poverty while reinforcing the logic of **just, inclusive, and development-oriented governance**.

Afghanistan is in the grip of the Taliban, whose totalitarian interpretation of the *Shari'a* has monopolised power, instrumentalising religion, ethnicity, and gender for political ends. At the same time, the Taliban has dismantled the frameworks that keep society together. Afghanistan's experience demonstrates that totalitarian governance is not only incapable of resolving crises but also becomes a structural factor in exacerbating them. The purpose of the CCR is to establish a framework to prevent the recurrence of conflict stemming from state failure by proposing a fair mechanism to build a legitimate constitutional government that reflects Afghanistan's ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity.

The CCR Vision

The transformation to a just society will come through a three-layered process: **national dialogue, regional dialogues for peace**, and **international consensus** through a United Nations-led process. This will establish fundamental freedoms, equal participation for women, human rights, and development, with equal access to education.

To facilitate this transition, the CCR proposes to unite resistance forces, political parties and groups, civil society and human rights institutions, women's rights advocacy networks, academic and cultural actors and *ulema* (religious scholars) within a cohesive structure, called the **Political Convergence Framework** (PCF).

The CCR vision is built upon seven pillars:

1. Moderation and order.
2. Pluralism.
3. Future-oriented dialogue.
4. Power balancing.
5. Institutional reform.
6. A new social contract.
7. National, regional, and global engagement.

The CCR acknowledges women's **struggle for freedom, justice, and human rights** alongside the legitimate defence by resistance currents against the Taliban. Any engagement with or

concession to terrorist groups constitutes a direct threat to the country's peace, security, and development, and the CCR emphasises the necessity of their elimination from Afghanistan. The CCR is a plan to build solidarity among all forces and movements working to liberate the country from the evil of terrorism and deliver freedom, justice, and security for its citizens.

PART ONE: FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND KEY VALUES

I. Foundational Principles

- Human dignity and fundamental rights.
- The rule of law and governance system accountability.
- Social and structural justice.
- Human security and sustainable peace.
- Democracy and civic participation.
- Inclusive sovereignty and cohesion.
- Independence and fairness of the judiciary.
- Parliament and separation of powers.
- Democratic transition to an inclusive, structured government.

II. Key Values

- Freedom of thought, conscience, expression, and lifestyle.
- Gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Comprehensive peace, just coexistence, and human development.
- Cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity, and intercultural interaction.
- Promotion of a culture of historical critique and learning from the past.
- Strengthening citizen participation and civic responsibility.
- Government transparency, accountability, and responsibility.
- A market economy based on social responsibility and justice, directed towards sustainable development.
- Environmental protection, specifically the prevention of reckless, expedited mining in the country.
- Reconstruction of Afghanistan's education system with values of inclusivity and diversity at its heart to foster a modern generation, in urgent response to the Taliban's reported creation of 23,000 madrassas.
- Development of an independent, balanced foreign policy based on the principles of ethics and international law.
- Trust and future-oriented cooperation.

PART TWO: STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

I. The Strategic Imperative: A Framework for Legitimate Change

Afghanistan's transition from Taliban domination requires a strategy that goes beyond opposition to proactively constructing a legitimate alternative. This is based on analysis of the regime's inherent weaknesses, and will synchronise *internal* resistance with *external* pressure.

II. The Logic of Change: From Totalitarian Fragility to Pluralistic Resilience

The Taliban regime, although seemingly entrenched by force, suffers from profound fragility. Its rule is characterised by managerial incompetence, systemic corruption, oligarchic rivalry, and ties to transnational terrorist networks. As a totalitarian apparatus alienated from its own society, it is incapable of ensuring long-term stability or social cohesion. The regime's lack of legitimacy makes it vulnerable.

The core strategic logic is to compound these weaknesses while building the architecture for a *legitimate* successor. Change will not result from a single-dimensional action, but from sustained, multi-layered pressure that undermines the regime's control and credibility while strengthening the conditions for a *cohesive alternative*. Success depends on transforming Afghanistan's internal political culture and simultaneously reshaping its regional and international standing.

III. Strategic Pillars: A Convergent Approach

Success depends on four interconnected actions:

- **Convergence—Forging a Unified Political Alternative.** The fragmentation of anti-Taliban forces makes them weak. The immediate priority is to establish an inclusive Political Convergence Framework (PCF). This must unite armed resistance groups, political parties, civil society, women's movements, religious scholars, youth, transregional traders, and diaspora representatives around a common platform grounded in human rights, gender equality, and the right to self-determination. It must become the recognised and legitimate political force for change, recognised both nationally and internationally.
- **Pressure from Within—Empowering Internal Resistance.** The Taliban's greatest fear is a mobilised civil society and resistance against them. Support must be increased for underground networks, resistance movements, youth movements, women's rights advocates, the ulema, and professional guilds within Afghanistan. This includes documenting human rights abuses, facilitating civil disobedience, and protecting social capital. Internal resistance provides the indispensable social credibility for the external political alternative.
- **Pressure from Without—Wielding Coordinated External Pressure.** Internal pressure must be amplified by unrelenting external action. This requires a coordinated campaign using all legal, diplomatic, and economic tools to sanction Taliban leaders, hold them accountable for "gender apartheid" and crimes against humanity, and diplomatically isolate the regime. The goal is to make the cost of maintaining totalitarian rule untenable.

- **The Diplomatic Track—Mobilising Regional and Global Consensus.** In parallel with pressure, active diplomacy will establish a viable pathway for transition, beginning with consensus among key regional states on the necessity of an inclusive government, achieved through regional peace dialogues. This regional understanding will then be elevated to the UN to convene an international conference, tasked not with negotiating with the Taliban on their terms, but with endorsing and resourcing a credible Afghanistan-owned transition plan led by the PCF.

IV. Alignment—Moderation, Justice, and the Future

Underpinning these pillars will be a powerful, shared narrative that constrains the Taliban and legitimises the alternative. This Discourse of Moderation must:

- **Counter Taliban Narrative:** Promote progressive Islamic and traditional scholarly voices to challenge the regime’s dogmatic and politicised interpretation.
- **Centre Justice:** Systematically document the regime’s crimes as a tool for accountability and a rallying cry for action.
- **Offer a Credible Future:** Articulate a compelling vision of a pluralistic, prosperous Afghanistan that secures human security and dignity for all.

This strategic framework defines the **what** and the **why** of the transition. The following section details **how**, by outlining the operational design of its primary engine: the Political Convergence Framework.

PART THREE: POLITICAL CONVERGENCE FRAMEWORK

While the strategic pillars define the direction, the Political Convergence Framework (PCF) is the central mechanism for its execution. The PCF is conceived not as a mere talking shop, but as the nucleus to determine a fair procedure for the emergence of future legitimate government, tasked with immediate coordination and long-term transition planning.

I. Composition and Founding Mandate

To embody the pluralistic future it advocates, the PCF’s composition must be inclusive, representative, and principled. Its membership must comprise:

- Representatives of all major anti-Taliban resistance currents and political platforms.
- Leaders of civil society organisations, human rights groups, and women’s rights movements.
- Independent political figures, religious scholars, and ethnic community leaders.
- Representatives of professional guilds, youth networks, and the media.
- Delegates from Afghanistan’s exiled communities and diaspora across the region and the West.

Admission to the PCF is contingent on public adherence to its three non-negotiable principles: the people's right to self-determination, respect for human rights, and equality, including gender equality.

II. Immediate and Foundational Tasks

The PCF's initial phase (6-12 months) must focus on concrete, confidence-building outputs that demonstrate its seriousness and unity:

1. **Ratification of a Founding Charter:** Create a binding charter that establishes the PCF's structure, decision-making protocols, and commitment to the strategic pillars.
2. **Formation of a Joint Secretariat:** Establish a lean, efficient administrative body to coordinate communication, logistics, and diplomacy.
3. **Draft the Transition Roadmap Document:** Produce the detailed constitutional principles, structure for a Constituent Assembly, and framework for transitional justice that will form the basis for future negotiations and international engagement.
4. **Launch Coordinated Action:** Implement the four strategic pillars:
 - **“Convergence”**—Harmonise public messaging of all member groups.
 - **“Pressure from Within”**—Establish a secure channel to support and amplify internal resistance, including civil resistance.
 - **“Pressure from Without and Diplomatic Track”**—Authorise a dedicated diplomatic team to formally present the PCF and its roadmap to regional capitals and the UN, seeking recognition as the legitimate representative of Afghanistan's alternative future.

III. Subsequent Stages and Pathway to Transition

Upon consolidation of its internal unity and initial diplomatic outreach, the PCF will activate the following operational stages:

- **Stage 1 – Securing International Mandate:** Lobbying for a UN Security Council resolution that mandates an international conference on Afghanistan, with the PCF as Afghanistan's primary representative.
- **Stage 2 – Regional Dialogues for Peace:** In parallel with the UN track, there will be regional dialogues to address geopolitical disagreements concerning Afghanistan and secure support for both the transitional conference and the broader transition process.
- **Stage 3 – Convening the Transition Conference:** Leading the delegation at the major international conference, to secure endorsement for its roadmap and the formation of a Preparatory Committee for a Constituent Assembly.
- **Stage 4 – Managing the Transition:** Through the Preparatory Committee, overseeing the inclusive selection of the Constituent Assembly and the formation of a meritocratic Transitional Government, in accordance with the roadmap.

Goal: The ultimate objective of the **PCF** is to create an irreversible process to sideline the Taliban in favour of the PCF as the internationally recognised representative for Afghanistan.

PART FOUR: POLITICAL TRANSITION: TOWARDS A LEGITIMATE POLITICAL SYSTEM

I. Launching the Roadmap for a Pluralistic Afghanistan

Afghanistan's crises require a solution based on a consensus of forces and movements fighting for a free Afghanistan. Through this, regional understanding will be achieved and comprehensive international support secured. The CCR proposes that, by implementing these measures, the PCF secretariat convene an international conference as a platform for endorsement and support, bringing together national, regional, and international actors. The goal of this meeting is to endorse and launch an action plan for establishing a legitimate, peaceful, and pluralistic Afghanistan.

This conference will focus on shaping and establishing the two fundamental institutions required for the political transition:

Preparatory Committee for the Constituent Assembly: This committee will be responsible for designing, organising, and finalising the electoral mechanisms and the composition of the Constituent Assembly, thereby establishing a representation-based foundation for shaping the country's future governance structure.

Transitional Governance Framework: This framework will define the initial executive authority responsible for guiding the political transition, maintaining stability, and implementing the conference's foundational agreements until the formation of a permanent, constitutionally mandated government.

II. Formation of the Constituent Assembly

The Constituent Assembly, as the legal and institutional pillar of the transition, is essential for regulating and legitimising this process. It is based on the principle that the **integrity and fairness of the process are the conditions for achieving sustainable and just outcomes**. It therefore pursues two core missions: ensuring the fairness of the transition process and providing the legal basis for social and political reforms, including a **political settlement**, the first of its kind in the country's history.

As the authoritative institution during the transition period, the Constituent Assembly will possess the following fundamental and supervisory powers:

- **Drafting a New Constitution:** Forming a specialised commission to prepare and propose a draft constitution as the foundational document of the future political system.
- **Guiding and Overseeing Transitional Policymaking:** Determining overarching directions and exercising legal oversight over decisions and policies during the transition to guarantee their coherence and legitimacy.

- **Institutional Structuring:** Organising the process of establishing and consolidating democratic institutions and creating sustainable and efficient governance structures.
- **Providing the Legal Framework for Transition:** Formulating the necessary legal rules for managing the transition period and guaranteeing the orderly and legitimate transfer of power to the interim government.

III. Formation of the Transitional Government

The Transitional Government will be established in accordance with the resolutions of the National Dialogues, regional understandings, and the endorsement of the international conference. Its primary mission is to manage the country's executive affairs during the transition and prepare for the formation of a legitimate, development-oriented, and democratically elected government.

The key powers and duties of the Transitional Government include:

- **Managing the Transition Period:** Leading and coordinating institutional activities and guaranteeing the country's executive stability throughout the transition.
- **Ensuring Order and Security:** Establishing and maintaining national security, countering threats, and dissolving irresponsible armed groups to guarantee the rule of law and public peace.
- **Return of Migrants and Exiles:** Creating safe and voluntary conditions for the return of citizens to the country.
- **Creating Legal and Institutional Infrastructure:** Formulating the necessary legal frameworks and institutional structures for the functioning of a pluralistic, democratic, and accountable government, including executive, judicial, and oversight bodies.
- **Preparing Elections:** Designing and guaranteeing the holding of transparent, free, fair, and inclusive elections for the legitimate transfer of power to a people-elected government.

IV. Proposed Stages

Initiate National Dialogues to:

- Articulate a shared vision, formulate a strategy for exiting the crisis, and introduce a comprehensive alternative structure.
- Secure regional and international support for the implementation of the Roadmap.
- Commencing implementation of the Roadmap by convening a national consensus, in coordination with regional security and development objectives and with the support of the international community via the UN.
- Formation of the Constituent Assembly.
- Formation of the Transitional Governance Framework.

V. Key Actions

- Holding free, fair, and transparent general elections.
- Establishing elected institutions and guaranteeing the separation and balance of powers within the governmental structure.
- Creating an independent judiciary and a Supreme Constitutional Court.
- Designing an inclusive, pluralistic, and accountable governance structure, aligned with sustainable development goals.
- Reviewing economic policies with a priority on improving the quality of life, distributive justice, and reducing inequality.
- Rebuilding and enhancing Afghanistan's international standing and its diplomatic relations.
- Promoting a culture of stability, pluralism, peaceful coexistence, and civic responsibility.
- Imposing term limits for senior executive positions within the Transitional Government.