

UNSC calls upon Taliban to go ahead with peace talks without any preconditions

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Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on February 28 unveiled a plan to open peace talks with the Taliban, including eventually recognising them as a political party, days after the militants called for direct negotiations with the US.

Representational pic

United Nations: The UN Security Council has urged the Taliban to go ahead with the peace process with the Afghan government without any preconditions and threat of violence, as it welcomed Kabul's offer to the terror group to engage in direct talks.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on February 28 unveiled a plan to open peace talks with the Taliban, including eventually recognising them as a political party, days after the militants called for direct negotiations with the US.

Welcoming the offer for the peace talks, Security Council President Karel Jan Gustaaf van Oosterom of Netherlands, in a statement said the UNSC members commended the convening of the second meeting of the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation in Afghanistan last month and the declaration agreed to by its participants.

"The members of the Security Council also welcomed the offer made by the Afghan Government to the Taliban to engage in direct peace talks, and called upon the Taliban to accept this offer without any preconditions and without the threat of violence, with the aim of an ultimate political settlement that leads to sustainable peace for the people of Afghanistan," the statement said yesterday.

The 15-nation Council underlined the importance of an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process for the long-term prosperity and stability of Afghanistan and expressed their full support for the Afghan government's commitment to developing a practical plan for reconciliation.

They welcomed that the participants of the meeting recognised the Kabul Process as a forum and vehicle under the leadership of the Afghan government to lead peace efforts to end violence in Afghanistan.

"The Kabul Process must lead to the renunciation of violence and breaking of all ties to international terrorism, as well as the respect for the equal rights of all Afghans, including women, under the Afghan Constitution," the Council said in the statement.

The members of the Security Council also welcomed ongoing international efforts to advance peace and stability in Afghanistan.

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