



GLOBAL FRIENDS *of* AFGHANISTAN

Ideas Shura

Guidelines for 2023 Submission and Review Process

Introduction

The Ideas Shura is an initiative that aims to provide a platform for Afghan youth residing inside and outside the country to share their opinions and proposals with the people of Afghanistan (primarily) and the international community (secondarily) on important policy questions about their country. All young people under the age of 29, either individually or in groups, are eligible to participate in this essay-writing initiative.

Call for Submissions

The Ideas Shura invites all young people from Afghanistan inside and outside the country to submit essays in line with the following guidelines by or before August 30, 2023.

- 1) Essays are welcome in English, Dari, or Pashtu.
- 2) The length of essays may not exceed 250 words. Some participants may be contacted and requested to develop their ideas into longer essays.
- 3) Young people (under 29 years old) may work alone or in a group.
- 4) Each essay should address one of the six questions that are outlined in this document.
- 5) Essays should be submitted via email no later than August 30th, at 11:59pm Afghanistan time, to ideasshura@globalfriendsofghanistan.org
- 6) Early submissions are encouraged.
- 7) Each person may submit up to 6 essays (one per question). We encourage you to focus on 1-2 submissions and develop your arguments and analysis well.

Security Risks and Mitigation

We understand that there could be risks associated with expressing your opinions. Your name will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the Review Board and the GFA Team by us. Your work will also not be published or posted publicly without your explicit consent. While we will do everything we can to minimize risks, you are best placed to assess the security risks and determine if you should participate in this phase of the Ideas Shura writing.

Review Process and Selection Criteria

- A group of 5-6 people will review each essay between July 1 - August 31.
- The review board will select 12 essays (2 for each topic) to request expansion and discussion at a GFA conference in Washington DC in early October 2023. Names of authors will not be disclosed to conference participants unless the authors consent to it. Selected authors will have the option to participate virtually in the conference and present their papers.
- Other essays will be developed, with the writer's participation and permission, into articles for publication.
- Criteria for selection will include diversity of voices as well as strength and clarity of arguments. Those who participate in this essay writing are encouraged to be creative yet realistic, critical yet constructive, and they are required to address the themes of the Ideas Shura.

Questions

1. **What is the most realistic and stable type of government for Afghanistan? For example, should local officials be voted in by citizens or appointed centrally?**
2. **What is the best understanding of "respect for human rights" in the context of Afghanistan?**
3. **What policies should Afghanistan choose with its neighbors and regional powers, given Afghan resources and vulnerabilities?**
4. **What is the future role of the Taliban in Afghanistan?**
5. **How can opposition groups of Afghanistan mobilize and collaborate to present a unified alternative to the Taliban?**
6. **What specific actions can UNAMA, or concerned countries, take in support of marginalized social and political groups in Afghanistan?**