

(1) Past Years...

reaching a peace deal to achieve these two major goals.

According to Khalilzad, steady steps have been taken in troop withdrawal from Afghanistan and counterterrorism assurances but insisted that much has not been done for intra-Afghan dialogue and ending war in Afghanistan. "Required steps for intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations between the Afghans for ending the war in Afghanistan have not been taken," Khalilzad said.

Khalilzad also explained that considerable progresses have not been made in ending the war and reaching an agreement for a permanent ceasefire adding that reaching a deal on all these issues will take time.

Once again Khalilzad stressed that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" adding that a peace deal is possible only when the parties agree on all the issues related to peace.

Khalilzad urged the Afghan youths to take part in bringing peace and supporting peace efforts.

On Tuesday, the US Embassy Charge d'Affairs Karen Decker hosted more than 120 Afghan youth leaders from government, civil society, private sectors and universities for an open forum discussion on youths' place in the peace process.

Decker, meanwhile, labeled the Afghan youth as the most important constituency of Afghanistan adding that least 63 percent of the country's populations are under 25.

USAID Mission Director Peter Natiello also addressing the group said US is committed to developing Afghanistan. "USAID remains committed and invested in Afghanistan. USAID's recently released five-year strategy lays out a plan to support Afghanistan toward self-reliance with continued investments in education, health, private sector led economic growth, agriculture, democracy and governance, and women's empowerment," he said.

US Ambassador John Bass also in a video message to the Afghan youth urged them to engage in the Afghan peace process and highlight their desired future and wishes.

"Everyone can be part of the national conversation that informs the dialogue on peace, so you can have confidence that the people talking about your rights, your hopes, and your future, know what is important to you," he said.

One of the worries over the ongoing peace talks between the US and Taliban is that the past achievements might be stepped on, but Khalilzad repeatedly have stressed that the US is committed to preserve the gains and help the Afghans to build upon them. (Tolo news)

(2) Europe, US...

international isolation of Afghanistan. Participants do not believe that the majority of the Afghan people desire that outcome.

Underscored that there can be no sustainable peace without an agreement between Afghans. This requires inclusive dialogue between the Taliban, Afghan government, and other Afghans that leads to intra-Afghan negotiations. Reaffirmed that intra-Afghan negotiations should begin as soon as possible, with the goal of reaching an agreement on a political roadmap for Afghanistan's future.

Urged all sides to take immediate steps to reduce violence and end the killing. The Afghan people deserve and want an end to violence. Calls for more fighting will not advance peace efforts, and will instead yield only more suffering and destruction.

Stand with Afghanistan's security forces in the fight against international terrorism.

Called on the Taliban to cut ties to Al-Qaeda, and other international terrorist groups, and to take concrete steps to ensure Al-Qaeda, Daesh and other international terrorists do not use Afghan soil to threaten or attack any other country. Stress the importance of fighting illegal drug production and trafficking, and urge all sides to eliminate the drug threat in Afghanistan.

Reaffirmed their commitment to provide long-term support for implementation of any peace agreement that protects the rights of all Afghan women, men, children and minorities, responds to the Afghans' strong desire to sustain the economic, social, and development gains they have achieved since 2001, and is consistent with their counter terrorism interests.

Encouraged all concerned countries to support the Afghan people and contribute to a lasting peace settlement in the interest of all. (Tolo news)

(3) Abrogating Constitution...

MaidanWardak, would be announced

next week. The new parliament may be inaugurated on Saturday.

Ghani said he was ready to open the new Wolesi Jirga's session. "You are shareholders in our democratic set-up. We are not in competition, but accountable to the nation and partners in law enforcement."

He added the lower house should not be changed into a breeding ground for extremism. "We should resolve our issues together. Mutual respect is necessary between the executive and legislative branches."

Ghani called peace, the Consultative Loya Jirga and the presidential elections as three important issues. He said the participation of lawmakers, particularly Wolesi Jirga members would be vital in the planned Loya Jirga.

The four-day Loya Jirga on peace is expected to be held in Kabul from April 29. Around 3,000 people including 30 percent women will participate in the event.

During a visit to the Consultative Loya Jirga hall in Kabul on Tuesday, Ghani said all hurdles in the way of peace had been removed. (Pajhwok)

(4) U.S. Embassy...

USAID Mission Director Peter Natiello also addressed the group, and underscored U.S. commitment to Afghanistan's development. "USAID remains committed and invested in Afghanistan. USAID's recently released five-year strategy lays out a plan to support Afghanistan toward self-reliance with continued investments in education, health, private sector led economic growth, agriculture, democracy and governance, and women's empowerment," he said.

In a video message to the youth leaders, Ambassador Bass called on the youth of Afghanistan to engage fully in the peace process. He said, "Everyone can be part of the national conversation that informs the dialogue on peace, so you can have confidence that the people talking about your rights, your hopes, and your future, know what is important to you." (PR)

(5) UN Notes...

winter conditions during the first three months of the year, which may have contributed to this trend, the report says.

It is unclear whether the decrease in civilian casualties was influenced by any measures taken by parties to the conflict to better protect civilians, or by the ongoing talks between parties to the conflict, the report mentions.

UNAMA says it remains concerned by the continued targeting of civilians and increase in civilian casualties from the use of non-suicide IEDs by Anti-Government Elements, as well as significant increases in civilian casualties from aerial and search operations, which drove an overall increase in civilian casualties by Pro-Government Forces.

Civilian deaths attributed to Pro-Government Forces surpassed those attributed to Anti-Government Elements during the first quarter of 2019, the report says.

Between 1 January and 31 March 2019, UNAMA attributed 608 civilian casualties (305 deaths and 303 injured) to Pro-Government Forces, representing a 39 percent increase from the same period last year.

UNAMA notes with concern that Pro-Government Forces were responsible for more civilian deaths than Anti-Government Elements during the first quarter of 2019.

UNAMA attributed 17 percent of civilian casualties to the Afghan national security forces, 13 percent to international military forces, two percent to pro-Government armed groups, and two percent to multiple Pro-Government Forces.

The report says that ground engagements were the leading cause of civilian casualties, causing approximately one-third of the total.

A single mortar attack incident by Daesh on 7 March 2019 in Kabul caused approximately one-fifth of all civilian casualties from ground engagements, the report says, adding that the use of IEDs was the second leading cause of civilian casualties.

During the first quarter of 2019, UNAMA documented four suicide IED attacks resulting in 178 civilian casualties, as compared to 19 incidents resulting in 751 civilian casualties during the same period in 2018, the report says. All four attacks were attributed to Taliban. Civilian casualties from ground engagements also reduced by 13 percent, the report says.

"UNAMA is very concerned by Anti-Government Elements' continued targeting of civilians and the increase in civilian casualties from non-suicide IEDs (21 percent increase), as well as the continuing, significant increase in civil-

ian casualties from aerial operations (41 percent increase) and search operations (85 percent increase) by Pro-Government Forces," the report says.

The report says that During the first three months of 2019, Anti-Government Elements remained responsible for the majority of civilian casualties, causing 963 civilian casualties (227 deaths and 736 injured), representing a 36 per cent decrease as compared to the same time period in 2018. UNAMA attributed 39 percent of civilian casualties to Taliban, 12 percent to Daesh, and three percent to unidentified Anti-Government Elements.

Contrary to 2017 and 2018 trends, the majority of IED civilian casualties were caused by non-suicide IEDs rather than suicide IEDs, the report says.

Aerial operations were the leading cause of civilian deaths and the third leading cause of civilian casualties, followed by targeted killings and explosive remnants of war. Civilians living in Kabul, Helmand, Nangarhar, Faryab and Kunduz provinces were most affected (in that order).

The overall decrease in civilian casualties was largely driven by a significant -76 percent - reduction in civilian casualties from suicide IED attacks, the report says.

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"We hold ourselves to the highest standards of accuracy and accountability. We strive for precision in all of our operations. We reserve the right of self-defense of our forces as well as the Afghan Security Forces. The best way to end the suffering of non-combatants is to end the fighting through an agreed-upon reduction in violence on all sides. The Taliban are ultimately responsible for the suffering and deaths of their fellow Afghans as long as they ignore their demands for peace," Butler said. (Tolo news)

(6) Heavy fighting...

Taliban as well as government and foreign forces.

The Afghan affiliate of Islamic State, sometimes known as Islamic State Khorasan (ISIS-K), after an old name for the region that includes Afghanistan, has made some inroads into other areas, in the north in particular.

It has also established a reputation for unusual cruelty, even by the standards of the Afghan conflict, and has been behind some of the deadliest attacks in urban centres.

While Nangarhar, on the border with Pakistan, has been an Islamic State stronghold, some villages in Khogyani and Shirzad districts have been controlled by the Taliban.

Fleeing villagers said they had to run for their lives. "I could only rescue my family. We had to leave everything," said Shawkat, 36, a resident of Markikhel village in Shirzad district who sought safety in a neighbouring village.

Attallah Khogyani, a spokesman for the provincial governor said, authorities would help the displaced villagers with food and medicine.

In August, more than 150 Islamic State fighters surrendered to the Afghan security forces after they were defeated by the Taliban in the northwestern province of Jawzjan.

The U.S. military estimates there are about 2,000 Islamic State fighters in Afghanistan. Many are former Taliban. There is scant evidence of direct links with Islamic State in the Middle East, where the group has lost territory it once held in Syria and Iraq to Western-backed forces. (Reuters)

(7) Speakers...

the people of Afghanistan and brought misery to every family."

Lodin added the people of Afghanistan had lost their patience due to continued war and yearned for peace in the country.

Deputy Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs Aminuddin Muzaffari, welcomed holding seminars on such topics

and said the Afghans were tired of war and desired peace.

Nabi Musadiq, presidential advisor, read out President Ashraf Ghani's message. Ghani said only peace could pave the way for education and ensure stability and prosperity. (Pajhwok)

(8) Thousands to Lose...

the customs office and we lost our job." He warned they would shut the Herat highway if their demand was not accepted.

Ghulam Sarwar Burhani, another demonstrator, said, "We also protested few days ago and the governor's house gave us false promises and moved the Herat customs office to Islam Qala." He said they would struggle for their rights.

Sayed Arif, another protestor, said, "We came here to defend our rights, we would close the highway and would not let the customs office to be moved anywhere else."

Meanwhile, Shamrod Khan Masjidi, the Finance Ministry spokesman, said that the decision for shifting the Herat customs office to Islam Qala port was taken to increase revenue, prevent goods trafficking, tax evasion and provide better services to people.

He said the shifting would also help reduce corruption and create more work opportunities for people.

Most of the protesting people were not formal workers of the customs office, he said.

Under the customs law, customs offices should be located on borders and a similar decision would be taken regarding the custom offices of Kandahar and the northern region of the country, he said.

Bordering Iran, Islam Qala port is 120 kilometers west of Herat city. It is one of the country's major border towns, which earns billions of afghanis in revenue for the government each year. (Pajhwok)

(9) Another 89 WJ...

The elections in Kandahar were held a week later.

The successful candidates from Bamyan, Daikundi, Jawzjan, Uruzgan, Kapisa, Zabul, Panjshir, Nimroz, Parwan, Khost, Samangan, Sar-i-Pul, Kunar, Nuristan, Badakhshan, Faryab, Laghman, Nangarhar, Logar, Helmand, Kandahar, Paktika, the Hindu/Sikh minority, Ghor, Herat, Badghis, Balkh, Farah and Takhar provinces had received the victory acknowledgment letters from the IEC so far. IEC head Hawa Alam Nuristani said the 89 candidates who received their victory acknowledgment letters from the election body had succeeded with public vote.

She said the newly appointed electoral bodies were committed to fighting for people's rights and protecting their vote. (Pajhwok)

(10) 28 Taliban...

the insurgent group's commanders, Dost Mohammad Mesbah, Usmani, Mullah Noor and Mullah Hamza were among the dead.

"These rebels had destabilized Mawra-i-Kukcha area and Dasht Kala district," he said.

Takhar governor's spokesman, Jawad Hajri, told Pajhwok that Afghan forces recaptured huge areas from Taliban in Dasht Kala district.

"Afghan forces would build two new bases in Dasht Kala district in the near future," he said.

Taliban did not comment about conflict in Dasht Kala district.

However, the Taliban's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid on last Monday said that their fighters hit an Afghan National Army (ANA) tank with a bomb. He had said that the tank was destroyed and four ANA soldiers onboard were killed in the incident.

The recent conflicts in Dasht Kala district forced around 2,000 families to leave their homes and take refuge in safe areas. (Pajhwok)

(11) Philippines' Duterte...

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visited Manila in 2015, he said that a "Canadian solution" was being developed and said the situation would not occur again, according to the news outlet. (Fox News)

(12) \$1 Billion in...

thing" that people are willing to spend their own money to help rebuild and restore.

Should the Catholic Church and French government be picking up the tab for Notre Dame disaster, or are things better left in private hands? Watch the full debate on RT. (RT)

(13) Rights Group...

group's deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa, said in a statement issued after the results were announced Tuesday.

El-Sissi's "desire to demolish an independent judiciary and secure his au-

ocratic rule for at least 11 more years is re-creating the impoverished and repressive political environment that drove Egyptians to revolt against former President (Hosni) Mubarak in 2011."

Authorities said Tuesday the amendments were approved by 88.83% of voters, with turnout of 44.33%. The constitutional amendments extend the presidential term from four years to six years, but include a special clause extending el-Sissi's current term to 2024 and allowing him to run for another six-year term. The amendments recognize the military as the "guardian and protector" of the Egyptian state and give military courts wider jurisdiction for trying civilians. They will also allow el-Sissi to appoint top civilian judges.

El-Sissi led the military overthrow of an elected but divisive Islamist president in 2013 and was elected president the following year. Last year he was re-elected after all potentially serious challengers were arrested or pressured to withdraw from the race. (AP)

(14) Peace, Honesty...

actor with no prior political experience, Zelenskiy, 41, beat incumbent Petro Poroshenko by a landslide, promising change to a country at war with Russian-backed forces and facing some of the worst poverty in Europe.

In a wildly successful election campaign, Zelenskiy remained vague on some key policy questions, trading on the image of the honest everyman he plays on TV: a schoolteacher who accidentally becomes president after a rant about corruption filmed by one of his students goes viral. (Reuters)

(15) China-Aided...

persuading local authorities to accept Chinese standards was a tough job, said Yan Xinde, general manager of the Karot Power Company.

Yan's team invited Pakistani officials and technicians to the Three Gorges Dam project on the Yangtze River in China, the largest hydroelectric complex in the world.

After checking it out for themselves, they were convinced. "Therefore, the Karot project has become the first hydropower plant in Pakistan that has completely adopted China's standards," Yan said.

In September last year, the plant finished a river closure and entered into the comprehensive construction phase. It aims to annually meet the electricity needs of about 2 million local households and deliver about 20 million U.S. dollars in taxation, Yan said.

"We created some 3,000 jobs for local Pakistanis, and some 1,000 Chinese workers are also working on the project around the clock in efforts to complete the Karot project in advance," Yan said. Yet another challenge was the relocation of locals, as most land was private, and villagers have lived there for decades.

"Most of them were supportive as they know we are here to help them develop," said Yan. "We made a lot of efforts by visiting them one by one to find out their requirements and to make considerate solutions while abiding by local legislations." Saleem joined the relocation team. Its members "assess every aspect," including land, structures, plants, animals and businesses. "Each and every thing, we make it a part of our assessment and then we pay the people," she said. Resettling can sometimes be painful. However, in the pain there's healing. Some locals launched a campaign to offer prospects of a bright future and a strong homeland to those, especially elders, who had lingering doubts. Naseer Hussain, a 31-year-old local driver of Holar Village in the Karot area, took part in the campaign. "I know very well how such a project is crucial for our country," Hussain said.

In the past, Hussain earned an irregular income. Now working as a driver for the Karot project, he receives a salary, bonuses and overtime pay, plus a friendly working environment. Moreover, the Chinese company built a school and a hospital, both of which have been transferred to local authorities. "We also set up a scholarship for all college students from relocated families to support their higher education," said Yan. Yan, who first came to Pakistan in 1988, has stayed for more than 15 years. There, he has witnessed a constantly advancing society.

Since the launch of the CPEC, Pakistan has acquired multifold development opportunities in such areas as energy and transport infrastructure, helping the country "embrace more investment, employment and industrial cooperation," said Yan.

"It will be beneficial for the industries," said Saleem. "When industries grow, automatically people will grow and it will impact the national economy as well." (Xinhua)