

Local Army Deployment Sparks Concerns in North

MAZAR-I-SHARIF - Residents, civil society activists and Provincial Council members of northern Balkh province have warning against a repeat of the wrong experience of the Afghan Local Police (ALP) in the form of creating a local army.

The warning comes at a time when the process of deploying the local army has just been set in motion in Faryab and Jawzjan provinces in the northern zone.

According to the Shaheen Military Corps in the north, the force of two battalions has been approved for deployment to Chamtal and Chahar Bulak districts.

Provincial Council Chairman Mohammad Afzal Hadid said he recently held discussions with Shaheen Military Corps officials on the formation of the local army.

He said a proper framework and strict monitoring of the local army was promised by military officials during the meeting.

"Now that the process of the local army formation is underway, people are concerned that the bad experience of the Afghan Local Police force may be repeated," he remarked.

Hadid said important information regarding the deployment and structure of the local armed forces had been shared with him but still he would strictly monitor their effectiveness.

Haji Sultan, a tribal elder from Chahar Bulak district, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the Afghan Local Police had earlier had a presence in the district.

He said the ALP had suffered casualties in the past two years, losing many areas to the Taliban. This contributed to the worsening of the security situation.

He said ALP personnel conducted illegal activities, robbed people at night and acted as policemen in daytime. The ALP leadership was handed over to former commanders who misused their powers.

But Nangyal Habibi, a civil society activist, hoped with the deployment of the local army personnel to far-flung areas, the security situation would improve. Mohammad Hanif Rezae, spokesman for the Shaheen Military Corps, acknowledged public concerns and said the local army would be like the Afghan National Army. (Pajhwok)

Afghan Special Forces Destroy Suicide Bombers Training Center in Logar Province



KABUL - The Afghan Special Forces destroyed a training center of the suicide bombers during an operation in central Logar province. The 203rd Thunder Corps said

in a statement the Special Forces destroyed the suicide bombers training center in Tagab area of Baraki Barak district.

The statement further added that the Special Forces also killed 8 Taliban

militants during the same operation. Furthermore, the 203rd Thunder Corps said the Taliban militants were also using the compound as a storage depot of weapons, munitions and explosives. (KP)

Illegal Immigrants from Iran, Afghanistan Detained in Turkey



BAKU - Thirty-four illegal immigrants were detained in Turkey's north-western Edirne province, Trend reports on Aug. 12 referring to the Turkish media. The detainees are citizens of Iran and Afghanistan. Among them there are also children. The detainees intended to illegally get to Europe. Some 796,000 illegal migrants from different countries, who intended to get to Europe, have been detained in Turkey over the past 3.5 years. Reportedly, 18,700 organizers of illegal migration to Europe were detained during the reporting period. Illegal immigrants get to the European countries from Turkey by paying 500-7,000 euros. Some 144 people died during six months of 2019 as a result of wrecks of several boats and a ship carrying illegal immigrants to Europe. During the reporting period, 64 illegal immigrants died in accidents in Turkey. Some 43 illegal migrants have been found frozen to death on Turkey's borders with Iran and Greece. (Trend)

Interior Ministry Rejects Taliban's Claims Regarding the Release of 76 Security Personnel



KABUL - The Ministry of Interior has rejected the Taliban claims regarding the release of 76 security personnel who were being kept in group's prisons. The interior ministry said in a statement said the group has claimed that it has released 76 security personnel in Kunduz, Uruzgan, Khost and Sar-e-Pul provinces on the occasion of Eid. The statement further added that the findings of the ministry and information received from the provinces con-

firms that the group has released no captive soldier.

Furthermore, the interior ministry said Taliban has issued the statement with an aim to spread propaganda as no captive soldier has been released during the recent days.

The interior ministry also added that Taliban should prove and show to the people of Afghanistan if they have really decided or willing to release the inmates. (KP)

Hashish Grown on 80pc of Logar's Azra Land



PUL-I-ALAM - Public representatives and officials in central Logar province say 80 percent of Azra district's land is cultivated with hashish crop and Taliban collect millions of rupees as usher from growers. Hasibullah Stanikzai, the Provin-

cial Council chairman, said that cultivation of hashish had increased in Azra district and become a good source of revenue for Taliban. Hashish is cultivated widely in Azra as people could gain good revenue from which 10th part is given to Taliban as usher, he said. (Pajhwok)

(1) US, Taliban ...

He added, "Eid Mubarak. I hope this is the last Eid where Afghanistan is at war. I know Afghans yearn for peace. We stand with them and are working hard toward a lasting and honorable peace agreement and a sovereign Afghanistan which poses no threat to any other country. (Pajhwok)

(2) Atmar May Join

A spokesman for Mr. Ghani's campaign, Jawed Faisal, said they are ready to welcome any election campaign team to join their ticket. This comes a day after First Vice President Abdul Rashid Dostum at a gathering in Jawzjan said that efforts are underway to bring Mohammad Yunus Qanooni, Atta Mohammad Noor and Mohammad Mohaqiq from Atmar's team to Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah's election campaign team.

"This team or maybe the main members of the team will probably support us [in the election]. There are common programs between the two teams," said Assadullah Saadati, vice-presidential candidate for Abdullah's team.

But a spokesman for Mr. Atmar's team, Qadir Shah, said discussions are underway among members of the campaign to remove the challenges ahead.

Mr. Atmar's team in a statement on Tuesday said that they will focus on two national processes: the presidential election and the peace process.

Origin of Rift

Last month, the political office of Atta Mohammad Noor, the former governor of Balkh and chief executive of Jamiat-e-Islami party, who is now part of Atmar's campaign team, the disagreements broke out after Mr. Atmar backtracked from

his original position on the post of premiership.

Noor's aides said that Mr. Atmar had committed in a written document to create the post of prime minister once he wins the presidential election.

The differences deepened after Mr. Atmar said in an interview with TOLONews that the next president should have the authority to dismiss or appoint the upcoming prime minister.

But, Mr. Atmar's spokesman last month said the creation of the post of prime minister was of a national issue and that the campaign is holding talks regarding the issue to reach to some type of understanding on it. (Tolo news)

(3) No Let Up in Violence...

Air bombardments, night raids, and attacks conducted in both rural and populated areas resulted in the killing and maiming of women, men, and children who had no part in the fighting.

Homes, mosques, schools, markets and health care facilities are being hit. "Too little attention is being paid to the suffering of civilians. They must be protected and respected at all times," said ICRC's head of delegation in Afghanistan, Juan-Pedro Schaerer. Medical workers, too, must be protected and respected by all sides.

Attacks against health care providers and facilities are too high, with 59 incidents in the first half of 2019. All sides must allow patients unhindered access to health services regardless of their affiliation "Attacking a single doctor or nurse undermines life-saving healthcare for everyone. This must stop," Schaerer said.

The ICRC is also deeply concerned about the fate of people detained by all sides in relation to the con-

flict, regardless of the side which is holding them. Detainees must have access to health care, to basics such as clean water, clothing, and hygiene items, and contact with their families.

Though humanitarian needs continue to grow, the security situation makes it difficult for help to reach those in need of food, water, shelter and security. This year has seen the highest number of incidents involving humanitarian workers in the last few years.

The ICRC in April was forced to interrupt some activities, including assistance for the wounded in difficult-to-reach places; facilitating the transfer of patients wounded in war; facilitating the transfer of battlefield dead to their families; and visiting people in detention and facilitating visits and phone calls by their families.

While the ICRC remains committed to its work in Afghanistan, it requires unhindered access to deliver urgently needed humanitarian aid for those affected by the armed conflict.

According to international humanitarian law, parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, an activity that is impartial in character.

"Even as talks between the sides continue, all parties to the conflict must do more to protect civilians, civilian property, medical workers and medical facilities," said Schaerer. "Measures now being taken to spare civilians and civilian infrastructure are not enough." (Pajhwok)

(4) Pakistani Envoy...

The remarks are expressed at a time that the US and the Taliban negotiators wrapped up the eighth

round of peace talks in Qatar. The two sides are expected to sign a peace agreement within the next few days which will provide the ground for US troop withdrawal and reduction of violence in Afghanistan.

This comes after on August 9, Pakistan's Ambassador to Afghanistan Zahid Nasrullah Khan said that India-Pakistan tensions over Kashmir will not affect the Afghan peace process.

"While Pakistan and the international community is focused on the resolution of the Afghan conflict, India has chosen this time to destabilize the region," Mr. Khan told Afghan media during a press briefing in Kabul.

He stated that Kashmir was a longstanding dispute between India and Pakistan and it has nothing to do with the conflict in Afghanistan.

The two traditional nuclear-armed South Asian neighbors exchange war of words following a controversial decision by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi who terminated article 370 of the Indian constitution, a controversial move that followed the revocation of special status on the Indian administered Kashmir.

In response to Modi's provoking move, Pakistan's national security committee on Wednesday decided to downgrade its diplomatic ties with Delhi and Islamabad also announced that it was cutting trade ties with India completely. (Tolo news)

(5) US Forces Reject...

nearly half to 6,000 as a means of finalizing "technical" details among Taliban leadership.

The withdrawal figure is subject to change, however, depending on the course of the ongoing conflict

and the talks trying to end it, US officials told Newsweek. (Pajhwok)

(6) About 2.5 Million ...

According to the ambassador, the total number of pilgrims for this year increased by 117, 731 pilgrims which represents 4.96% compared to last year's record of 2, 371 ,675 pilgrims.

He said the number of male pilgrims as released by the authorities is 1, 385 ,234 pilgrims, while the number of female is 1, 104, 172. "The number of pilgrims of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries is 31,884 pilgrims which is 2% percent, while the number of pilgrims from Arab countries outside the Gulf Cooperation Council countries is 414 ,750 pilgrims, or 22%.According to the statistics, the number of pilgrims from Asian countries of non Arabic descent stood at 126, 633 pilgrims representing 61%.

Mr. Bostaji said African pilgrims from non Arab countries constituted 10 percent which represented 187,814 pilgrims.

"The number of pilgrims of European countries is 67,054 pilgrims which is 4%, while the number of pilgrims from North and South America and Australia is 26, 892 pilgrims which is 1%," he stated. (Pajhwok)

(7) 61 Nangarhar ...

facilities remained open on polling day, he said.

Wagari said election related materials which included, ballot paper , biometric devices, ballot boxes and other items would be shifted to the polling stations hours before the launch of polling.

Eighteen candidates have been contesting the September 28 presidential polls. (Pajhwok)