

### (1) NATO Eyes...

According to the NATO Resolute Support (RS) mission, the agenda of the 5-6 December meetings of NATO Foreign Ministers did not include a dedicated discussion on Afghanistan thus there will not be a meeting in Resolute Support format; and the Afghan Foreign Minister will not be in attendance.

Talking to reporters at the pre-Ministerial press conference NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg highlighted the alliance gains and continued commitment to Afghanistan.

Stoltenberg agreed with General John Nicholson who earlier said the Taliban had three options to join peace process, they will go in isolation or they will be killed. He added, there was need to strengthen NATO military presence with more trainers, with more advice to break the stalemate, to enable the Afghan Forces to regain territory, to send a clear message to the Taliban and to the terrorists that they will not win on the battlefield. So they have to sit down at the negotiating table and find a negotiated solution.

"The situation in Afghanistan is difficult. We see violence. We see terrorist attacks. The Afghan National Security Forces have suffered casualties. But at the same time we see some progress. We have for instance seen that this year the Taliban has not been able to gain control or take control over any of the provincial capitals, despite that that was one of the declared strategic goals of the Taliban this fighting season. And we have also seen that the Afghan National Security Forces are able to respond every time the Taliban and insurgents are attacking," he added. When asked about US defence Secretary James Mattis trip and CIA director warning to Pakistan the secretary general said they welcomed the fact that Secretary Mattis recently visited Pakistan.

"I think it's important to have close dialogue with the countries in the region because we need their support to fight terrorism, to fight the Haqqani network, and to help to stabilize Afghanistan. And I had also the pleasure of travelling together with Secretary Mattis."

He added NATO had decided to strengthen its presence in Afghanistan with more trainers, with more troops in our train assisted advice mission.

"we have also then to engage in dialogue with neighbours, including Pakistan, to make sure that there are no sanctuaries, no safe havens for international terrorists outside Afghanistan, which help and support insurgents inside Afghanistan," he added. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Afghan Forces ...

as well as with the UN and the international community to see that the child protection policy is fully embedded into the Afghan military's operations," said General John Nicholson, the Resolute Support commander.

"Under my watch, I've already made it clear and now I'm going to make it very clear: If soldiers under my command - the US or any of the 38 other Troop Contributing Nations providing forces here - are witness to any gross violation of human rights, they have a duty to report immediately. We have improved our training and our own policies and procedures, and fast-tracked our efforts to make sure that we have the right tools in place to make it easier to report, and easier to follow up," Nicholson said.

Sven Dornig, the special advisor to Gen. Nicholson on children and armed conflict - a first for the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan - has been an active interlocutor helping inform the development of the Afghan child protection policy and bringing additional focus to the effort within Resolute Support.

"NATO policies and guidelines to embed child protection within the larger framework of protection of civilians, are relatively recent. We know that children are especially vulnerable during the conflict and disproportionately affected by violence.

"It is for this reason that we are trying to ensure that our efforts protect both boys and girls from violations during the conflict," said Dornig. "Regional organizations such as NATO have a responsibility and role to ensure the protection of children in conflict settings. The protection needs are vast, and a coordinated approach is needed."

In January 2017, Gen. Nicholson met in New York with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Chil-

dren and Armed Conflict to discuss measures, in partnership with the international community to improve the situation of children in Afghanistan.

Within Resolute Support, relevant pre-deployment and in-theatre training of personnel have been improved and instruction is now included in pre-deployment training taking place four times a year at NATO's Joint Force Training Centre in Bydgoszcz, Poland.

In addition, children in armed conflict training are provided twice a year to incoming key leaders, and twice a month to incoming advisors to the train, advise, assist mission. Personnel can also access an online NATO-distributed learning course on Children and Armed Conflict developed with the support of the United Nations in New York.

Child protection focal points in each of the military regions and functional areas have also been established, providing the means to support related programming and initiatives throughout the country and to monitor and report through the chain of command.

A new, common, web-based database is being implemented specifically for NATO personnel to quickly report all human rights-related cases and allegations that they observe during the TAA mission in Afghanistan.

This database will improve information sharing amongst the various systems and respective offices within the Coalition. It was designed in support of UN reporting mechanisms and is additionally supportive to US Leahy Law tracking requirements. It will enhance existing mechanisms to account for all gross violations of human rights, including children and armed conflict violence, as well as sexual and gender-based violence incidents across Afghanistan observed by NATO personnel.

In addition, Resolute Support personnel continue to support various senior Afghan officials and institutions including Afghanistan's Office of National Security Council, to address instances and allegations of human rights abuses of youth in custody.

According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), child casualties remained at high levels during the first six months of 2017, accounting for 30 percent of all civilian casualties. (Tolonews)

### (3) Afghan, Uzbek ...

He said a joint commission will oversee the implementation of the cooperation agreements between the two countries.

He also promised to open another consulate in Afghanistan in the near future.

President Ghani meanwhile thanked the Uzbek President for his support to peace and stability in Afghanistan and added that the Uzbek leader has laid the foundation of an agenda for regional cooperation.

"Afghanistan supports Uzbekistan's position adopted at the UN, which is highlighted in President Donald Trump's new strategy," Ghani said. "The government and people of Afghanistan want Uzbekistan as a trading partner which would be for the benefit of both countries."

Ghani added: "Today we signed agreements which reflect state-to-state cooperation. 2018 will be the year of implementation of our goals. We have to make every human effort to ensure that the Surkhan Dara is connected to Pul-e-Khumri (capital of Baghlan province in Afghanistan)." He also invited Mirziyoyev to visit Afghanistan and the Uzbek president accepted the invitation. (Tolonews)

### (4) Afghan Athlete ...

gold medals at the US Indianapolis Para-Swimming World Series. He was first Afghan to qualify for the World Para-Swimming Championships in Mexico.

Karimi was born without arms. Karimi has in the past also taken gold at swimming championships for the disabled in Turkey in 2013.

Karimi became a national team member five years ago. (Tolonews)

### (5) Daesh Not on...

Dr. Mohammad Rasoul, a lawmaker from northern Faryab province, said the Islamic State fighters were busy recruiting fighters in the north, asking the government to conduct military operations there.

Senate Chairman Fazal Hadi Muslimyar said security officials should be summoned to the house. He told the two lawmakers to express their concern to the security bosses in the next session.

Earlier, President Ashraf Ghani had claimed defeating Daesh in several parts of the country including Tora Bora by Afghan security forces and that the terrorist outfit was on the run in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

### (6) UN Seeks Talks ...

conflict to protect the civilians from harm and encourage all parties to move forward to build peace in Afghanistan," said Yamamoto.

Talking on the issue of elections in Afghanistan, Yamamoto said that he hopes that women participation in the elections will be very broad.

"I can assure you that the United Nations will put all its weight to ensure that women can take their part in elections as voters, campaigners, electoral officials and candidates," added Yamamoto.

There are a lot of concerns among the right groups that the recruitment of children for war purposes has also increased in Afghanistan. The practice is a clear war crime.

"Children are recruited in the ranks of local police forces, we hope that this trend comes to an end," said AIHRC chairperson Sima Samar.

But the ministry of interior affairs has pledged that the government will be considering some changes in the structure of police in the near future.

"With regards the allegations that in the past children were recruited in the structure of the local police, this problem has been identified. We cannot reject this issue completely," said the Minister of interior Wais Ahmad Barkam.

Participants at the gathering stated that the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan has also led to a surge in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Based on the statistics of AIHRC, last year over 200,000 people were displaced across Afghanistan due to the war and violence. (Tolonews)

### (7) AAF and Army ...

it has been reported.

According to the local media reports, New Delhi agreed to provide more security-related assistance based on needs of Afghanistan's defence and police forces.

The commitment was reportedly made after President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani's visit to New Delhi where he met with his Indian counterpart, PM Narendra Modi and other senior Indian officials during a one-day State visit.

India has played a major role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime and has invested over \$2 billion in various reconstruction and infrastructure projects.

The construction of the major Salma Dam, the new Afghan parliament building, Zaranj-Delaram highway, and some other projects are among the key investments India has done so far in the country. (KP)

### (8) Indonesia Shares ...

and principles of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," or unity in diversity, that encourage creating peace and harmony in the country.

For a short-term program that will soon be implemented in 2018, Indonesia will invite five representatives from Afghanistan to learn about women empowerment efforts.

"The Afghan government expects their women to function as mediators and peace makers in tackling internal and international issues as well as to serve as religious leaders and contribute to resolving conflicts," Yembise said.

Ghani's trip to Indonesia this early December was a return visit after Yembise had visited Afghanistan in May 2017. During that time, Yembise was invited to speak at a symposium on women's empowerment.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's spouse said she aims to gain greater insights on the positive aspects of Indonesia, a country that she has not known in detail.

Some aspects that can be learned from Indonesia are legal procedures, the process of eliminating discrimination and violence against women, conflict prevention, as well as women's movement.

"I want to learn in detail about the problems related to women faced in Indonesia," she remarked. (Bernama)

### (9) Sino-Afghan Economic ...

cooperation, gas transport from Turkmenistan to China through Afghanistan, fiber optic connection through Wakhan corridor, a railroad institute and affordable housing schemes were also on the agenda.

Aynak Copper and Amu Darya projects, marble, pine nuts and pomegranate exports to China were also considered.

Agreements were signed on new facilities of Char Chenar Palace, equipment for the Jamhuriat Hospital and China Aid Office supplies for the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Over 100 Companies...

Kaminzada said.

Meanwhile, the deputy minister of Ministry of commerce and Industries for trade said the growth of domestic products will create jobs for the citizens of the country and the country's economy will grow.

She said close attention should be given to supporting domestic production.

"It is our obligation to support our private sector, especially with our national products and by increasing investment in our industry to create better job opportunities," Siddiqi said.

Hafizullah Shojae, a worker of the footwear industry, said domestic shoes are of good quality and that citizens of the country must use local products. (Tolonews)

### (11) Selection of...

future, said President Ashraf Ghani's spokesman, Shahhussain Murtazawi.

Meanwhile, election monitoring groups have said that the government is trying to exploit the election process for political purposes.

This follows ten days after president Ghani issued a decree ordering the selection committee of the IEC commissioners to appoint a new candidate for the position of IEC chief, however, the selection committee remains caught in a dilemma.

"Last night the second vice-president held discussions with the members of civil society institutions where he urged that a solution to be found to the issue. Members of civil society institutions also pledged to share their views and findings with the government today or tomorrow," said Murtazawi.

"The fate of selection committee has not been determined so far and it is still in a dilemma. The legal aspects of the presidential decree have not been confirmed," said Yusuf Rashid, a former member of the selection committee.

Election monitoring groups have accused the government of breaking the law and exploiting the election process for political purposes.

"When the law is violated and efforts are made to influence the process through illegal ways, naturally the question arises about the Afghan government's efforts to politicize the process," said Jandad Spinghar, head of Afghan Civil Society Election Network.

The Afghan government has defied the allegations of exploitation of the election process, reiterating the calls for implementing systematic reforms in the elections commission and election law.

"The government does not politically interfere in the electoral process. Based on the president's order, the selection committee needs to initiate its work to introduce a commissioner of the IEC," said Jawed Faisal, deputy spokesman to CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

This comes at a time that Afghanistan prepares to go the polls for parliamentary and district council elections in less than eight months. (Tolonews)

### (12) Female MPs ...

were some candidates who had no higher education but they were voted, lawmakers should clarify why they rejected Nargis Nehan, a well qualified woman."

Najiba Hussaini, another member of the upper house, asked the government to nominate women for the remaining three ministries currently led by acting officials. She asked Wolesi Jirga members to vote for female candidates when introduced by the government.

Zalmai Zabulai, a senator from Zabul province, expressed concern over rejection of Nargis Nehan and said: "Nehan was rejected by female lawmakers, they even campaigned against her."

Zabuli claimed most of male lawmakers who were his friends had told him they voted for Nehan.

A number of other senators were of the same views and they demanded more share for women in the Cabinet. (Pajhwok)

### (13) Alice Wells Meets ...

During her visit, Ambassador Wells underscored U.S. support for Afghanistan's continued economic and political development, the holding of timely and credible elections, as well as efforts to

bring peace, security, and stability to the country and the region as part of the U.S. South Asia strategy. (PR)

(14) Steel Melting products have good markets in the country.

"Currently, 120 Afghan workers are working in the plant where I am in charge. We are trying to create the necessary technical capacity for this plant, which is why our products are well known in the marketplace and we have a lot of buyers," said Sonil Singh technical engineer for the plant.

A plant needs about twenty-five megawatts of continuous electricity. Therefore, the plant authority has created a special electricity sub-station for the factory from the Uzbekistan electricity supply system. The plant officials said that about \$3.5 million (US) has been spent on regulating the power system in the plant.

"In this factory, all the necessary technology needed for production is used. Many of the technologies we utilize at this plant have not been used in the country's iron and steel industries," said Shahabuddin the plant publications head. (Tolonews)

### (15) Speaking Out against ...

are establishing a dialogue across the country with young people who care about the health of the nation," said Dr. Najib. As with many local initiatives, his peace efforts are not underpinned with foreign money, and they are driven primarily by local volunteers.

"My concern is to give moral support and momentum to the peace movement as we face up to violence across Afghanistan," he said.

UNAMA's chief, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Tadamichi Yamamoto, has welcomed local grassroots peace efforts, which he says can help drive a new Afghan-wide peace dialogue. In a recent opinion piece in The Diplomat, a leading pan-Asian news outlet, he called for a "sustained push for peace in a conflict in which there can be no military solution, nor any one victor."

New polling has shown a groundswell of Afghans agree with that assessment. On 2 December, the Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS) in Kabul released a survey that showed 83 per cent of respondents across a number of key provinces in Afghanistan believe that the current war in Afghanistan does not have a "winner" and the only way to end it is through dialogue. Likewise, in November, the annual Asia Foundation survey found a majority of Afghans believe peace through dialogue with insurgents is possible.

### (16) Ghani Approves ...

He also served as the deputy head of the Afghan intelligence, national directorate of security in the past.

His last post in the government was in northeastern Takhar province where he was serving as the provincial governor of the province.

Zia was appointed for the post by the government in the year 2015 but due to unknown reasons he stepped down from the post. (KP)

### (17) German Govt....

of these categories.

"He is not a criminal, is not being observed as a potential terrorist and has cooperated in giving his identification papers," said Philipp Pruy, an immigration lawyer from BC Legal Lawyers. "He is unfairly and callously being sent back but he has not committed a crime and he has cooperated in making sure the government can identify who he is. The lawyer told the daily: "They only told him one week ago that he would be deported. He fears his life could be in danger."

The young man, whose asylum application has been rejected, told the Guardian he was stressed at the prospect of returning to a country he had not been to since the age of five. (Pajhwok)

### (18) Taliban Issues ...

under the new permissions have already begun, as Afghan and coalition forces struck the source of the Taliban's finances: the narcotics trade.

"In just over three days' worth of operations, the Afghan 215th Corps, their special forces commandos, their air force, in close cooperation with U.S. forces, removed between \$7 million and \$10 million of revenue from the Taliban's pocketbook," Gen. Nicholson said. (KP)