

### (1) Millions of Afghans...

based in Europe and Afghanistan and sent to the ICC, Pedram said. Because one statement might include multiple victims and one organization might represent thousands of victim statements, the number of Afghans seeking justice from the ICC could be several million.

"It is shocking there are so many," Pedram said, noting that in some instances, whole villages were represented. "It shows how the justice system in Afghanistan is not bringing justice for the victims and their families."

The ICC did not give details about the victims or those providing the information.

"I have the names of the organizations, but because of the security issues, we don't want to name them because they will be targeted," said Pedram, whose group is based in Kabul.

Many of the representations include statements involving multiple victims, which could be the result of suicide bombings, targeted killings or airstrikes, he said.

#### Fear for safety

Among those alleging war crimes is a man who asked The Associated Press to be identified only by his first name, Shoaib, because he fears for his safety.

Shoaib said his father, Naimatullah, was on a bus in DawlatYar district in Afghanistan's central Ghor Province in 2014 when a band of gunmen stopped it and two other buses, forced the passengers off and told them to hand over their identity cards. The 14 Shiites among them were separated from the rest and killed, one by one, he said.

The slayings outraged the country. A Taliban commander was soon arrested and brought before the media, but no news about a trial or punishment was ever reported, said Shoaib, who is in his 20s.

Displaying a photo of the man he believes killed his father, Shoaib said he doesn't go to the authorities for information about the incident because the commander had connections with the police and the local government administration.

Shoaib is still afraid.

"Please don't say where I live, or show my face," he implored a reporter. "What if they find me? There is no protection in Afghanistan," he said.

"Everybody knows that they have connection in the government," he added. "I think in Afghanistan, if you have money, then you can give it to anyone, anywhere, to do anything." Several powerful warlords, many of whom came to power after the collapse of the Taliban in 2001 following the U.S.-led intervention, are among those alleged to have carried out war crimes, said Pedram, who also is cautious about releasing any names.

After receiving death threats last year, Pedram fled Kabul briefly and now keeps a lower profile, no longer speaking to local media.

"The warlords are all here. You have to be very careful," he said. "In the morning, I kiss my little son goodbye, I kiss my wife goodbye because I don't know what will happen to me and when, or if I will see them again." World's criminal court

Established in 2002, the ICC is the world's first permanent court set up to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The ICC can only investigate any crimes in Afghanistan after May 2003, when the country ratified the Rome Statute, the treaty that established the court. Former President Bill Clinton signed the treaty, but President George W. Bush renounced the signature, citing fears that Americans would be unfairly prosecuted for political reasons.

In November, when ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda sought judicial authorization to begin the investigation, she said the court had been looking into possible war crimes in Afghanistan since 2006.

Bensouda said in November that "there is a reasonable basis to believe" that crimes against humanity and war crimes were committed by the Taliban as well as the Haqqani network. She also said there was evidence that the Afghan National Security Forces, Afghan National Police and its spy agency, known as the NDS, committed war crimes.

Bensouda also said evidence existed of war crimes committed "by mem-

bers of the United States armed forces on the territory of Afghanistan, and by members of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in secret detention facilities in Afghanistan," as well as in countries that had signed on to the Rome Statute. The secret detention facilities were operated mostly between 2003 and 2004, she said.

#### Breaking through impunity

It was the first time that Bensouda has targeted Americans for alleged war crimes. Bensouda said an investigation under the auspices of the international tribunal could break through what she called "near total impunity" in Afghanistan.

The prosecutor's formal application to the court set up a possible showdown with Washington. While the U.S. is not a member state of the ICC, its citizens can be charged with crimes committed in countries that are members.

At the time of Bensouda's announcement, a Pentagon spokesman said the U.S. Defense Department does not accept that such an investigation of U.S. personnel is warranted. The U.S. State Department has said it opposes the court's involvement in Afghanistan.

#### Justice for a loved one

Another Afghan who went to the ICC is Hussain Razaee, whose fiancée, Najiba, was among 30 people killed in July when a Taliban suicide attacker rammed a car bomb into a bus carrying employees from the Ministry of Mines.

For months, Razaee said he contemplated suicide. He had spent two years convincing Najiba's parents to allow them to marry, and they had finally agreed. Unlike most Afghan couples, theirs was not to be an arranged marriage.

"I lost the person I loved," he said.

Razaee said he went to the ICC because he wants those responsible to be punished, even if a peace deal with the Taliban is reached.

"I am pursuing this because I want the ICC to record these cases so that if there is a peace agreement, the Taliban leaders will be required to identify the people behind the killings," Razaee said.

"I don't trust the international community to bring any of these warlords or Taliban to justice, but if an international legal body rules according to the law, then the government could be forced to enforce it," he said. (VoA)

### (2) Pakistan Wants...

the border is fenced."

Asif also said the return of more than 2 million Afghan refugees from Pakistan is essential for peace and wants the U.S. to help with the repatriation. The Pakistani government sees the refugee camps as a breeding ground for militants while Afghanistan accuses its neighbor of harboring terrorists and carrying out a "war of aggression."

#### Aid cut off to Pakistan

Trump infuriated Pakistan last month when he cut off nearly \$2 billion in aid, accusing Islamabad of not doing enough to combat terrorism.

Trump said Pakistan has played U.S. leaders for "fools," taking more than \$33 billion in aid over the past decade and giving back nothing but "lies and deceit."

Pakistani politicians called Trump's words insulting and humiliating. (VoA)

### (3) Residents Complain...

"Every day we wait for hours on roads because of heavy traffic. One day I carried a patient in my car, but despite that I was stopped, and the patient was screaming," taxi driver Mohammad Nadir said.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) meanwhile said the security check points have been established to ensure people's safety and that some of them will be removed in the near future. "The unnecessary check points will be removed soon from Kabul city and the Kabul Security Plan will be implemented fully and we will witness big changes in Kabul security in the near future," Interior Ministry spokesman Najib Danish said.

According to Kabul Traffic, big trucks are not allowed to enter in Kabul's green zone, especially in Wazir Akbar Khan area during day time but they can enter the area after fully checked by security forces during night time. However, it is said that these trucks enter the area by giving bribes during day time either. (Tolonews)

### (4) NATO Does...

efforts to find a political solution and we strongly believe that this should be an Afghan-led and an Afghan-owned peace process, so therefore NATO support the Afghan-led and the Afghan-owned peace process, which also of course, at some stage, has to include finding a political solution with the Taliban. But Taliban has to understand that they cannot win on the battlefield, they have to sit down and negotiate," he added.

Meanwhile, the US Defense Minister James Mattis has said that they are filling the gaps in Afghanistan.

"I'm filling the gaps in Afghanistan. We're still engaged with various nations, right now, I believe we have, of 12 nations that have committed specifics, others are still going through the requirements, so, I see it going in the right direction, but again, more work needs to be done," Mattis said. (Tolo news)

### (5) UK Calls for...

on its commitment regarding the elections security and election budget," said CEO deputy spokesman Omid Maisam.

However, critics are still skeptical about government's ability to hold elections on time.

"My observation shows that in the face of negligence by government, it just wastes time, I don't think that the elections will be held on time," said political analyst Fatana Gailani.

In June last year, the IEC announced the election date for parliamentary and district council elections. But as the deadline looms, speculation has increased over whether this deadline will be met.

This also comes amid claims by the IEC that government is not responding to correspondence calling for action.

On Monday, the IEC's financial and administrative deputy head Mazaullah Dawlati said government is not responding to the commission's official letters regarding the outline of electoral constituencies. (Tolo news)

### (6) Security Forces...

to seize control of the other check posts.

"Four police, three public uprising forces and 23 Taliban insurgents were killed during the clashes," he said.

Meanwhile, Faryab Ulema announced their support to security forces but criticized government for not having what they called a proper security plan in place for the province. (Tolo news)

### (7) Senior US...

Abdullah, National Security Advisor Mohammad Hanif Atmar, National Directorate of Security Chief Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, High Peace Council Chairman Karim Khalili, Secretary General of the High Peace Council Akram Khapalwak, and Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Karzai.

She also met with prominent Afghan political, business, and media representatives to highlight the longstanding US-Afghan partnership.

Additionally, Wells met with Resolute Support and US Forces-Afghanistan Commander General John W. Nicholson, Jr., as well as with UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Afghanistan and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan Tadamichi Yamamoto, to discuss ongoing US and international community support for efforts to bring peace and security to Afghanistan and the region, the statement added. (Tolo news)

### (8) Graduates...

have been able to gain good positions in the world's economic and political system," said Omari.

He said more higher education opportunity has been provided for youths and that they should leave no stone unturned to increase their capacity.

Some of the graduates said there are more employment opportunities for private universities graduates in the job market.

"The private institutions provide additional programs to students besides that they help the graduates to find job," Roena Sediqqi, a university graduate.

"In the last year of university, the students are introduced to a private, government or semi-government institution and they start practical work in Kabul or other provinces," Ghiyas

Sadaat, a master's degree holder said. (Tolo news)

### (9) Abdullah Calls...

involvement of national consensus and public agreement.

"CEO demands postponement into the distribution of E-NICs in order to seek views from national consensus and prevent further differences on this issue," the source said.

CEO would discuss this important issue in a meeting with the president next Saturday, the statement said, adding that the E-NICs distribution and problems towards it should be talked on state-level.

Some government officials earlier told Pajhwok that distribution of E-NICs would formally start next week. The sources said that 60 officials including ministers, governors and political figures would take part in a process in which serial numbers for their e-NIC would be awarded. (Pajhwok)

### (10) We will Defeat...

the key and strategic areas of Afghanistan, he said that implementation of TAPI project and construction of Bakhshabad Dam would bring positive changes to the province.

Abdul Basir Salangi, newly appointed Farah governor, said that shortage of human resources and military equipments for Afghan forces was one of major problems towards security of the province.

He asked the US general to support Afghan forces in equipping them in Farah province.

Salangi termed the ongoing operation conducted with the support of Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in the province effective and he insisted on its extension.

The army chief and deputy interior minister also talked about achievements of Afghan security forces in Farah province and stressed for solution the Afghan forces faced there.

On the other hand, the two officials said that further Afghan forces were deployed in Shindand district of western Herat province.

The visit of the officials to Farah comes as Taliban took hostage 20 passengers from vehicles in their checkpoint located only 10 kilometers from the provincial capital today. (Pajhwok)

### (11) Government...

report and credited his personal who moved carefully and prevented harm to civilians.

"We don't reject UNAMA report, but the figure they released was higher than our figures," said Waziri. He said according to MoD 9,143 civilian suffered casualties with 2,903 dead and 6,240 injured last in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Taliban Has No...

with other countries in the region and China is one of them," said the NATO chief.

Meanwhile President Ashraf Ghani has called on the Afghan public to unite against insurgents as they did during the Soviet occupation.

"I must repeat that it was our unity, resilience and our perseverance that steered us to victory against the red army and what followed after. And it will be our unity and determination that will drive us toward creating a safe and modern nation based on a strong respect for our diversity and for the rule of law," said Ghani. NATO officials say that the Taliban has no intention of joining the peace process.

Meanwhile, US generals in Afghanistan have expressed confidence that with the increased air and ground strikes on the Taliban which also makes up a core component of President Donald Trump's war strategy will break the military stalemate against the Taliban and that this will eventually force the Taliban to come to the negotiation table.

"The enemy has suffered major casualties, they have lost the capacity for face to face war, enemy's activities in the battlefield have decreased 50 to 60 percent" said Afghan defense ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri. On Wednesday, the Taliban published an open letter to the American people, calling on them to demand an end to the conflict in Afghanistan and to reject "the inexperienced policies of president Trump and his war-mongering advisors".

The letter comes after the US increased air strikes on Taliban and Daesh strongholds in multiple re-

gions across Afghanistan - inflicting a heavy toll against the militants.

In January, US President Donald Trump rejected the idea of talks with the Taliban after a series of deadly attacks in Afghanistan, in an apparent contradiction of his own strategy to end America's longest foreign war.

"I don't think we're prepared to talk right now. It's a whole different fight over there. They're killing people left and right. Innocent people are being killed left and right," said Trump. (Tolo news)

### (13) ADB Pledges...

spokesman Wahidullah Tawhidi said the technical survey on the project has been completed by the officials from Afghanistan and Uzbekistan.

"The power transmission line is from Surkhan to Pul-e-Khumri. The Asian Development Bank has pledged \$70 million for the project. At least 12 days ago, a technical team from Afghanistan and Uzbekistan conducted a survey on feasibility study and design of the project," Tawhidi told TOLOnews.

According to DABS, this power line will transmit up to 1,000 megawatts of electricity from Uzbekistan to Afghanistan and both countries will start the construction phase soon.

The completion of the power project will bring light to people in ten provinces of the country, DABS said.

DABS previously said that Uzbekistan had committed that with the implementation of the project, Uzbekistan will provide cheap electricity to Afghanistan.

"I think it is a very good step for boosting investment in the country, considering the current situation (in Afghanistan). The involvement of Uzbekistan in Afghanistan's economic development is a big victory for Afghan government despite that the (Kabul) administration has many failures," SayedMassoud, university lecturer and economic affairs analyst, told TOLO news.

The Pul-e-Khumri-Surkhan power project, a project which will inject over 1,000 megawatts of electricity into the Afghan power grid.

The agreement for the project was signed during President Ashraf Ghani's recent visit to Uzbekistan. (Tolo news)

### (14) Taliban's Letter...

approach to peace and would be happy to reintegrate all those Taliban that repent their actions and seek forgiveness from the Afghan people for their atrocities committed against a peace loving innocent civilians.

In an unexpected overture at a time of increasing bloodshed in Afghanistan, the Taliban have published an open letter expressing a desire for peace talks and calling on the "American people" and "peace-loving congressmen" to pressurise the Donald Trump administration into negotiations.

The letter, released by the Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, comes amid deteriorating conditions for US and Afghan coalition forces on the battlefield and after a month in which two Taliban assaults on Kabul killed 150 civilians.

For its part, the Taliban refuses to talk to the Afghan government without first discussing the withdrawal of foreign troops with its powerful ally.

"If the policy of using force is continued for another one hundred years," the letter reads, "the outcome will be the same ... as you have observed over the last six months since the initiation of Trump's new strategy." (Pajhwok)

### (15) Weak Leadership...

making last efforts for their presence in Helmand and some security forces suffered casualties due to recent fighting," he added.

Effective security plans had been made for durable peace in the province and these plans would be soon implemented. (Pajhwok)

### (16) Barns to Protect...

snow leopards stray into residential areas in search of food and attack household animals in the area".

Recently a snow leopard attacked people's livestock and killed 10 animals and later an illegal armed commander killed the leopard.

Eng. Mohammad AlamAlami, provincial head of the agriculture department, said welcomed the project that he said would help save wildlife in the Wakhan National park. (Pajhwok)