

(1) HPC Responds...

Donald Trump to change his war policy in Afghanistan and pursue peace.

The letter, which was addressed to "the American people", says the US invaded Afghanistan for three goals: "Establishing security by eliminating the so-called terrorists inside Afghanistan, restoring law and order by establishing a legal government and eradicating narcotics". However, the letter says the US and its allies have failed to achieve these goals.

The letter mentioned that the continuance of war and remaining of US forces in Afghanistan was not in favor of anyone and that this "threatens the stability of the world". "Your president and his military and political officials following his war policies still speak the language of war in Afghanistan," the letter read. The Taliban asked the American people that if they want peaceful dialogue with Afghans specifically and with the world generally, then they need to make their president (Donald Trump) and the "war-mongering congressmen and Pentagon officials understand this reality and compel them to adopt a rational policy towards Afghanistan".

Tuesday's conference, organized by the HPC, has brought together more than 800 influential Afghans from across 34 provinces.

HPC chairman Mohammad Karim Khalili also addressed the conference said that Afghans are pro-peace and support peace.

"We have been consulting with all the people of Afghanistan about peace and security, all the people in the country are pro-peace and support our voice for peace," Khalili said.

He said Afghan people believe in peace and that a military approach is not the solution.

Khalili also pointed out that President Ashraf Ghani's recent visit to the council was testimony to government's commitment for peace.

"The presence of Ashraf Ghani the president of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in such a critical situation at HPC and providing assurances for continuation of negotiations, is demonstrating the commitment of the government for peace," Khalili added.

On February 3 Ghani addressed the general session of the High Peace Council meeting after a string of deadly attacks in Kabul and said the peace door for those involved in recent attacks in Afghanistan was no longer open and that government will hunt down the attackers no matter where they are hiding.

"The door of peace for those behind the tragedy (in Afghanistan) is closed," he said.

"We will chase them (militants) anywhere they hide. Afghanistan will take revenge, but wisely."

Speaking to delegates at Tuesday's conference, Khalili said that some foreign circles want to sabotage peace efforts.

"Some foreign circles are seriously trying to sabotage peace efforts in the country and recent attacks are an indication (of this)," Khalili said.

Khalili called upon all delegates to carry messages of peace to their areas and communities and cooperate with the HPC council.

"We call upon all of you as influential figures from across the country to take peace messages to each nook and corner of the community," Khalili added.

Meanwhile Khpalwak said that efforts are under way for peace in Afghanistan.

"Efforts are going on for peace in Afghanistan at national and international levels, Kabul Process (meeting) is a clear indication of such efforts," said Khpalwak.

"We all are responsible for bringing about peace, it is the duty of each Afghan. We the tribes request you to devise a clear peace mechanism," said Abdul Qayom Khan, a tribal elder from the south-east.

Delegates meanwhile also called on neighboring countries to help Afghan reach peace and security instead of adding to the violence.

"We kindly request the neighboring countries not to add to our suffering,

instead of supporting violence and conflict, help us build peace and security and assist us in education and prosperity," said Talib Jan, a tribal elder from Kandahar. (Tolo news)

(2) Rashid Khan...

of the achievement came on Monday after Afghanistan completed a 4-1 series-win over Zimbabwe in Sharjah. Rashid was the highest wicket-taker in the series, claiming a remarkable haul of 16 wickets for a total of 127 runs, at a staggering average of 7.9. Before Rashid, the youngest man to be No.1 in any of the MRF Tyres ICC Player Rankings was Saqlain Mush-taq. The Pakistani off-spinner was 7,683 days old when in January 1998 he ascended to top spot in the ODI rankings. (Tolo news)

(3) Kabul, Riyadh...

Meanwhile, the Saudi news agency WAS reported intelligence officials and a number of interior ministry advisors also attend the meeting. Atmar is expected to hold talks with high-level Saudi officials. (Pajhwok)

(4) Afghanistan Launches...

According to him, he is in the country in the hope of investing in the aviation sector.

"This is a big step for Afghanistan. This is what I have seen in other countries in the region. This is a positive move," said Bret Dalton.

With the launch of this visa processing unit, foreign investors will no longer have to find an Afghan embassy to process documents - as the staff at the unit will send their documents to the foreign affairs ministry. These investors will then be able to get visas, valid for up to three years, on arrival. "The visa processing unit for investors is aimed at encouraging foreign investment and providing investors with the necessary facilities," said Feroz Khan Masjidi, deputy minister of commerce and industries for investments.

"In the past there was no such privileges or facilities for foreign investors. They have faced tremendous problems. They would try to get visas in various regions, at embassies, to get a visa for Afghanistan," Samir Rasa, head of the media office for the senior advisor to the president said. Rasa said there are no restrictions regarding investors in terms of nationality - no countries are excluded. He said anyone who meets the criteria will be given visas on arrival.

In addition to this, officials from the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) said the launch of this visa center at the airport will help build investor confidence in the country.

"Unfortunately, recently the volume of foreign investments has suffered declines compared to two or three years ago," said Atiqullah Nusrat, ACCI CEO.

The Afghanistan embassy in Washington D.C states the following documents are required for visas on arrival.

A notarized copy of a valid business license with at least six-month validity

A new notarized bank statement to prove there is a minimum of \$100,000 USD in the account

A visa application form with a recent photo

The exact address of the company along with the valid commercial document in which the address of the company is cited

Visa payment fees are paid in accordance with Article 27 of the Travel and Residence Law for Foreign Nationals in Afghanistan. It is only applicable for issuing a business visa for business people and investors

An original copy of the business letterhead from the company
 Police Clearance or No-Objection Certificate (Tolo news)

(5) Second Meeting...

Its first meeting was held eight months ago with the participation of the representatives of 23 countries and several international organizations. The meeting comes as the U.S. and the Afghan government boycotted the peace talks with the Taliban after recent deadly attacks in Kabul.

Following the attacks, the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has repeatedly spoken of vengeance. On the other hand, the airstrikes of the Afghan and foreign forces against the Taliban has also escalated.

Afghan analysts believe Pakistan which is being accused of harboring militant groups, plays key role in Afghan peace. They say Pakistan

is seeking to gain Russia's support, after tense relations with the U.S.

"Pakistan will change its Afghan policy, if Russia also put pressure on the country, otherwise Pakistan will enjoy having Russia's support in the region," said Nasrullah Stanikzai, a Kabul University professor and a political commentator. (ATN)

(6) Serious Steps...

supporters of "terrorist groups" was necessary. He directed security organs to create a joint secretariat to promote programmes and evaluate findings on the emotive issue.

Spymaster Mohammad Masoom Stanikzai said the National Directorate of Security was implementing policies for cutting civilian casualties. Stanikzai asked the international community to pressure supporters of insurgents. (Pajhwok)

(7) Independent...

reminders and threats, we paid." Mohammad ArifNoori, head of the Ghazni Union of Journalists and Media, said: "For the past three months, the Taliban have been asking media outlets for their turnover figures in order to assess the new taxes they must pay, and then send them threatening letters and warnings to make them pay up."

The victims of Taliban's ransom demands have included two radio stations, Radio Killid and Radio Sama. Both were asked to provide their turnover figures so that their taxes could be calculated.

Representatives of the radio stations said they immediately alerted local and national authorities. On the other hand, officials claim the media outlets refused to provide evidence of the threats that they needed to locate and prosecute those responsible. At the same time, the authorities claim that they have the situation under control and that they can guarantee the safety of the media outlets.

"In the light of this situation, protecting media and journalists must be a priority for the Afghan authorities," said Reza Moini, head of the Iran/Afghanistan desk at Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

"The Taliban are the media's enemies and their goal is to create news and information black holes. The media and the authorities must together find a solution to prevent the Taliban from taking the media hostage and demanding ransoms."

The security situation is worsening by the day. The authorities have proposed reinforcing protection for media premises. This may be effective but it has the drawback of cutting off media from their community. Experience also shows that this kind of protection is not effective in small towns. It is not just the media outlet itself that is targeted, but also its journalists and other employees.

Omari, critical of the lack of action by the authorities, says he paid the ransom in order to protect his own life and the lives of his 18 employees and because he did not think the security forces could guarantee their safety.

"After speaking out, Omari is now under threat not only from the Taliban but also from the authorities, who accuse him of "collaborating with the enemy."

After nine months of these threats, Radio Killid had to slash the number of its employees and Radio Sama is financial difficulty.

"We decided not to pay these ransoms and we told the authorities about these threats against the radio station and our employees on site, but they have done nothing," Killid media group CEO Najiba Ayubi told RSF.

"We are now broadcasting by satellite but with only two technicians. Sixteen employees have been laid off. And we cannot cover local news."

According to the information obtained by RSF, other media outlets have paid ransoms. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid has also confirmed that the Taliban have received these taxes. In reality, the government does not have complete control over provincial towns and villages.

Afghanistan is ranked 120th out of 180 countries in RSF's 2017 World Press Freedom Index. (Pajhwok)

(8) New Governor...

security in Logar. He, however, said success in all departments could be achieved if people, ulema and tribal elders supported him in his mission. "Youth, tribal elders and other stakeholders will be consulted ahead of every rehabilitation or security pro-

gramme," he said.

Addressing the gathering, former Governor Mohammad Halem Fedai said more work was needed to develop Logar.

"In my three years tenure, I gave priority to public interest not to their demands and did whatever served the interest of people," he said. Fedai accused foreign forces stationed in Logar of non-cooperative behavior with Afghan security forces. He did not provide more details. (Pajhwok)

(9) Daud Amin New...

newly appointed regional police commander would formally take charge soon. Amin replaces Lt. Gen. Mohammad Salem Asas.

Amin had previously served as police chief for eastern Laghman and southeastern Khost provinces and deputy head of security affairs at the 101st police headquarters. (Pajhwok)

(10) Both Taliban...

tax to government forces instead of militants.

"But local people are violating this decision and they continue to pay tax to insurgents", he added.

Tagab district chief, Ziaur Rahman Khaksar, rejected people's complaints and said no one collected tax in areas under their control. He said Joibar was a wide area in Tagab district and militants might be covertly collecting ushr in some parts.

The Taliban did not comment on the issue. But the group's spokesman had previously said that people voluntarily paid them ushr and zakat and they did not force anyone to do so.

Besides Kapisa, militants collect tax in other unstable areas of the country as well. (Pajhwok)

(11) US, NATO...

risk of the terrorists' penetration to Central Asia and it is not that difficult to get to Russia."

Lavrov stressed the need to step up efforts to prevent this scenario. "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, where Pakistan and India have full-fledged membership, is represented by all key neighbors of Afghanistan and Afghanistan is taking part as an observer at the SCO," he said.

The SCO's regional anti-terror body may take steps to thwart the IS growing influence in Afghanistan, Lavrov added.

Lavrov also called for reforming this SCO body so that it could also combat drug trafficking. "Unfortunately, the years-long presence of the US and NATO in Afghanistan has not reduced the terrorist threat, while the drug threat has grown manifold."

The Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was inked in China's Shanghai in June 2001 by six founding states - Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. On June 9, 2017 India and Pakistan became full-fledged members of the SCO.

Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia currently enjoy observer status while Sri Lanka, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia and Nepal are dialogue partners. (TASS)

(12) Samangan's...

as yet.

On Monday Jamiat-e-Islami Party of Afghanistan issued a press statement condemning government's decision to replace Khudam.

The party said Jamiat-e-Islami party had been a key party during the formation of the National Unity Government (NUG) and that the dismissal of the governor was unjustified, one-sided and in contravention of the political agreement forged at the time of the NUGs establishment.

According to Jamiat's statement, Khudam was appointed as the Samangan governor based on the NUG agreement.

On Sunday, Khudam also said government does not have the authority to fire him and that he refused to accept the decision. Khudam's deputy, Dr Zia, was also dismissed.

Khudam's dismissal comes just two months after Ghani ousted another Jamiat governor, Balkh's Atta Mohammad Noor.

Noor has refused to step down and is adamant that any decision about his removal is a Jamiat decision and not government's.

Ghani on Saturday appointed new governors for Laghman, Logar, MaidanWardak, Samangan and Kunduz provinces.

An IDLG statement said the five gov-

ernors were appointed based on recommendations of the directorate.

Abdul JabbarNaemi was appointed as governor for northern Kunduz province, Asif Nang, who previously served as Farah governor, has been appointed as the governor of eastern Laghman province.

Anwar Khan Ishaqzai has been appointed as governor for central Logar province, Dr. Shajehan for central MaidanWardak province and Abdul Latif Ibrahim for northern Samangan province, the statement said.

No details were given as to why the former governors were ousted. (Tolo news)

(13) World is Failing...

birth are up to 50 times more likely to die than those from the safest places.

The report also notes that 8 of the 10 most dangerous places to be born are in sub-Saharan Africa, where pregnant women are much less likely to receive assistance during delivery due to poverty, conflict and weak institutions. If every country brought its newborn mortality rate down to the high-income average by 2030, 16 million lives could be saved.

According to the UNICEF, 1 in 22 newborns babies will die in Pakistan, 1 in 24 in Central African Republic and third on the list is Afghanistan with 1 in 25.

More than 80 per cent of newborn deaths are due to prematurity, complications during birth or infections such as pneumonia and sepsis, the report says.

These deaths can be prevented with access to well-trained midwives, along with proven solutions like clean water, disinfectants, breastfeeding within the first hour, skin-to-skin contact and good nutrition.

However, a shortage of well-trained health workers and midwives means that thousands don't receive the life-saving support they need to survive. For example, while in Norway there are 218 doctors, nurses and midwives to serve 10,000 people, that ratio is 1 per 10,000 in Somalia.

This month, UNICEF is launching Every Child ALIVE, a global campaign to demand and deliver solutions on behalf of the world's newborns. Through the campaign, UNICEF is issuing an urgent appeal to governments, health care providers, donors, the private sector, families and businesses to keep every child alive by:

- Recruiting, training, retaining and managing sufficient numbers of doctors, nurses and midwives with expertise in maternal and newborn care;
- Guaranteeing clean, functional health facilities equipped with water, soap and electricity, within the reach of every mother and baby;
- Making it a priority to provide every mother and baby with the life-saving drugs and equipment needed for a healthy start in life; and
- Empowering adolescent girls, mothers and families to demand and receive quality care.

"Every year, 2.6 million newborns around the world do not survive their first month of life. One million of them die the day they are born," said Fore.

"We know we can save the vast majority of these babies with affordable, quality health care solutions for every mother and every newborn. Just a few small steps from all of us can help ensure the first small steps of each of these young lives." (Tolo news)

(14) In Remote Parts,...

"Currently all programs are implemented on project-level, a three-day workshop and seminar are provided with certificates, which is not beneficial for women," she complained.

NasreenOriakhel, women affairs director, said different organizations and NGOs used to implement project-level works for women but permanent works would also be done to improve women's living style under a proper plan.

She called job opportunities for women as essential and said efforts were underway to improve girls' educations.

She added a marketplace would be established for women in Gardez City to craftswomen were able to sell their handcrafts.

There are tens of local and foreign NGOs working in the name of improving women's lives in Afghanistan, but their work remains insufficient. (Pajhwok)