

(10) Foreign Policy ...

patient and disciplined strategy that uses every element of our national power. It says America will always act, alone if necessary, to protect our people and our allies; but on issues of global concern, we will mobilize the world to work with us, and make sure other countries pull their own weight," he added. (AFP)

(2) HRW Calls...

end and begin carrying it out in the first half of 2016."

According to HRW, Afghan officials have confirmed to Human Rights Watch that the plan has not been finished. Activists have urged donor governments to press the Afghan government to complete the plan, share drafts with donors, and seek funding for plan activities. Donors have yet to speak out publicly regarding the government's failure to do so.

"Women's rights activists in Afghanistan have been fighting for years for a place at the table where the future of their country is being decided," said Heather Barr, senior researcher on women's rights at Human Rights Watch.

"The Afghan government's failure to meet the promised deadline for developing this plan suggests a lack of seriousness about giving women the role to which they're entitled." The statement went on to say that Afghan women's rights activists have repeatedly called for women's full participation in the peace talks, as set out in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and later resolutions. Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000, played a historic role in stressing the importance of women's "equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security."

In the years since, the Security Council passed seven additional resolutions on women, peace, and security. In October 2015, the Security Council convened a high-level review of the implementation of Resolution 1325, in which governments noted the continuing absence of female negotiators, and pledged to change that situation.

"In June 2015, the Afghan government presented a national action plan to implement Security Council Resolution 1325 from 2015 through 2022. National action plans are a mechanism used by many countries to promote compliance with Resolution 1325. The Afghan plan includes the goal of 'ensuring women's effective participation in the peace process' and includes measures such as developing a roster of 'potential women negotiators,' and developing capacity building for women negotiators," read the statement.

According to Barr: "President Ghani should ensure women are full participants in every stage of the peace process and should produce a plan detailing the steps that are needed to do so."

"Research from around the world shows that women's participation increases the effectiveness, success, and sustainability of peace processes, so all Afghans will lose if women continue to be shut out," she added.

Afghan women's rights activists have for years raised concerns that the government will trade away women's rights in an effort to reach an accommodation with the Taliban. These fears have been exacerbated by the routine exclusion of women from the process. A 2014 study by Oxfam found that in 23 rounds of informal peace talks involving the Afghan government and the Taliban between 2005 and 2014, women were present on only two occasions. No women were ever included in the discussions between international negotiators and the Taliban that were examined by Oxfam.

Representatives of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States, and China met on Monday in Islamabad, Pakistan, to draw up a framework for reviving stalled peace talks. They will meet again next Monday.

Talks in July last year stalled after the announcement of the death of the Taliban leader Mullah Omar two years earlier.

However, the HRW's statement went on to say that "on September 5, 2015, high-level representatives of more than three dozen donor nations convened in Kabul for a "Senior Officials Meeting," the most recent step in an aid coordination process that began with the 2012 Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan and continued with the 2014 London Conference on Afghanistan. At the September 2015 meeting, the current Afghan government, led by President Ghani, made a number of commitments to donors, including

the promise that it would finalize the 1325 implementation plan by the end of 2015 and begin implementing it in the first half of 2016."

"Donors have stayed silent while the Afghan government missed this crucial deadline and continues shutting women out of peace talks," Barr said.

"The donors should show that they are serious about Resolution 1325 by pressing Kabul to produce a concrete and immediate plan for how women will be part of the process." (Tolonews)

(3) WJ Approves...

of the value of income sources and commitment to the people, the parliament approved the law," said Akli Hakemi, finance minister.

Previously, the Wolesi Jirga has rejected Presidential decree on allowing 10% tax from credit cards of mobile phones. (ATN)

(4) Russia to ...

Kabul has made overtures to Moscow to increase military aid to Afghanistan as the United States attempts to wind down its presence there. (AP)

(5) Ex-Jihadi ...

others continue the conflict for their own goals," said Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal, a former jihadi leader and member of the Council for the Protection and Stability of Afghanistan.

The former jihadi leaders also called on government to take a clear stance in the peace talks.

"Pakistan will cooperate at some extent, but the point is that this cooperation is kind of tactical. We will see that what Pakistani officials will do in the future," said Mohammad Akbari, MP and a former jihadi leader.

Meanwhile, the Wolesi Jirga speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said the past years' achievements should not be compromised in the talks.

"People and MPs should be made aware of the different phases of the talks. Government should not compromise the past 15 years' achievements and it should act seriously," he said.

This comes as representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan, U.S and China met in Islamabad on Monday in order to draw the map for the coming peace talks with the Taliban. Members of the session stressed on Afghanistan's integrity and sovereignty and agreed on direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. (Tolonews)

(6) MPs Hold ...

transparency in the e-NIC department's appointment process.

The report revealed that there has been extensive corruption in the appointment process and contracts of the e-NIC department which was assigned for preparing the ground to register and distribute electronic identity cards for Afghans country-wide. Also, it was part of government's campaign against endemic corruption public offices. (Tolonews)

(7) Ghani ...

of Afghan security personnel.

At least six persons were killed after a suicide bomber detonated himself in a targeted attack on the consulate. The premises were sealed off following the suicide attack and all staff was evacuated from the building.

"The officials of the Consulate General are safe. Only one official was slightly injured by a broken glass," said the Foreign Office. (Monitoring Desk)

(8) Afghanistan...

report stated that after the fall of Kunduz city to the Taliban in September the security forces acted more aggressively against insurgents. Terrorist groups struggled to take control of other cities in the country - after the three-day siege.

In addition, the report reveals that militant activities dropped considerably in the last two months of 2015, but militants focused more on major cities such as the capital city, Kabul. Among such incidents, Kabul witnessed a heavy blast in Shah Shaheed area in August which left 15 dead and 400 wounded, the report adds.

Security officials termed 2015 as "a year for survival" but the TOLONews report argues that it was the resistance and sacrifices of the Afghan security forces that helped the country survive the year and gain success to some extent.

Meanwhile, a former military official Atiqullah Amarkhel blamed the security forces' management for security challenges last year. "No doubt, the war will be successful if it is managed and commanded

well," said Amarkhel, a former senior military official.

The report says that Daesh was another threat that emerged last year in Afghanistan. Though the terrorist group had few activities in parts of the country at first they later developed into a problem for security forces.

According to the report, the first fighting between Daesh and Taliban fighters took place in Kajaki district in southern Helmand province in January and later the alleged Daesh fighters emerged in Zabul and Farah provinces.

The report states that kidnappings and increasing violence against civilians were other incidents that raised concerns among Afghans last year - where militants kidnapped more than 650 people - including the abduction of 31 bus passengers in Zabul.

"Civilians have always been victims of violence and conflict by militants - particularly the Taliban that always hide among the people," said Iqbal Safi, a member of Internal Security Commission in the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament). The report said that after the announcement of the death of the Taliban's former leader Mullah Omar infighting among the group surged, which was mostly due to differences in their leadership.

This split and infighting escalated in September. Supporters of Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour fought another faction of the Taliban that supported Mullah Mansour Dadullah. Among these conflicts, a new individual, Mullah Rassoul, was introduced as the leader of the Taliban's faction that supports Mullah Mansour Dadullah, the report states.

Going into details on kidnappings last year, the report says that at least 665 civilians and 241 military men were kidnapped by insurgents last year - most of them were released.

As per the report, Helmand, Nangarhar and Faryab witnessed the most security incidents last year while Panjshir experienced only two such incidents during 2015.

"Helmand was really in a bad security situation last year. The security forces struggled a lot to repel their attacks but despite that civilian casualties were very high," said Karim Atal, the head of Helmand provincial council.

The report says that Afghan security forces launched 5,481 ground operations, 242 air raids and 1,650 arrest and recovery operations last year.

"No doubt, 2015 was a difficult year, but this has a reason: The reason is the withdrawal of foreign troops and delivering the military operations' responsibly to Afghan troops," said Defense Ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri.

According to the report Afghanistan's eastern and southern parts were not secure last year but militants drove their attention towards northern and northeastern parts. (Tolonews)

(9) MoFA Celebrates...

and respect to human dignity.

He said: "This is the responsibility and obligation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to exert all its efforts as the sole Afghanistan's diplomacy apparatus administrator to fully implement the provisions of the constitution, especially in the field of foreign policy and international relations."

Later, Mutaqi, a member of the Commission on Overseeing the Implementation of the Constitution, spoke on key indicators of the constitution that are unparalleled in the region.

Majeedi, deputy chair of the International Affairs Committee of the Wolesi Jirga said: "Three main elements of the rule of law such as law effectiveness, executive management of the law, and protection of the law have been incorporated in the constitution of Afghanistan. We have to create conducive conditions for the implementation of the constitution through deeper understanding of the Afghan society. Fortunately, the Afghan constitution provides the Afghan people with the opportunity to determine their fate."

In conclusion, Najeeb Aqa Fahim, Director of Law and Treaty Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, gave a presentation regarding the constitution. (Tolonews)

(10) Russia Faces ...

situation in the economy is complicated but manageable, citing that Russia was one of the 10 countries with lowest foreign debt and biggest gold and currency reserves, as well as a stable banking sector, which he said would enable the country to take the "most energetic

measures" to overcome the difficulties and continue to help key enterprises in a host of sectors. (Xinhua)

(11) Officials Safe ...

terrorist attack on the Consulate General of Pakistan in Jalalabad, this morning.

He further said the Government of Afghanistan has been requested to thoroughly investigate this incident and bring the culprits to book.

"We have requested that details of the investigation should be shared with us," he said.

The spokesman said the officials of the Consulate General are safe. "Only one official was slightly injured by a broken glass."

The Government of Afghanistan has also been requested to ensure safety and security of Pakistan Missions in Afghanistan and our officials working there.

Earlier in the morning, Afghan security forces exchanged fire with gunmen barricaded in a house near the Pakistani consulate in the eastern city of Jalalabad after a suicide bomber blew himself up, killing as many as six people and wounding two, officials said.

Witnesses said heavy gunfire and a series of explosions could be heard and residents and children from a nearby school had been evacuated. (Agencies)

(12) IS in Afghanistan...

Intelligence Group, U.S. monitors of militant groups, the "Khorasan Province of the Islamic State" said three of its "soldiers" attacked the consulate in Jalalabad, capital of the volatile province of Nangarhar, which borders Pakistan. It claimed to have killed "dozens" of consulate staff.

Afghan officials said seven members of the security forces were killed in the attack.

Attaullah Khyogani, spokesman for the governor of Nangarhar province, said another seven people were injured during the attack, which began when a suicide bomber detonated explosives outside the consulate in the provincial capital Jalalabad and ended with a gun battle between Afghan security forces and militants.

He said that three attackers were killed, including the one who had detonated explosives on his body at around 9 a.m.

The siege ended when the two gunmen, who had taken position in a guesthouse close to the consulate, were killed at around 12.30 p.m. local time, Khyogani said.

Hazrat Hussein Mashraqiwal, the spokesman for the provincial police chief, said the dead included three police and two intelligence service officers, one each from the army and border police. Seven people were wounded, including three civilians, he said.

It was the first insurgent-style attack on a Pakistan embassy or consulate in Afghanistan, an official at the Pakistani embassy said, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Pakistani government properties have come under attack in the past during protests by Afghans angry at Islamabad's perceived support for the Taliban, who have waged war on the Kabul administration for more than 14 years.

The scene of the attack is close to a hospital and schools as well as the Indian consulate. The schools were evacuated, officials said.

The Pakistani consulate is usually busy during morning rush hour as people queue for visas. The suicide bomber joined the visa queue before blowing himself up, officials said.

The embassy official said all consular staff were evacuated.

In Islamabad, the foreign affairs ministry condemned what it called "the terrorist attack" on its Jalalabad consulate and requested a thorough investigation.

One official at the consulate was slightly injured by broken glass, it said in a statement.

Nangarhar is home to a number of insurgent groups and criminal gangs who benefit from the proximity to the Pakistan border. Insurgent attacks are not uncommon in Jalalabad.

The Islamic State group has established a presence in the province, having fought with Taliban gunmen in recent months to take control of at least four border districts. The attack comes two days after Islamabad hosted a meeting of representatives of Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States to discuss ending the Taliban's 14-year insurgency.

Pakistan is widely believed to support the Taliban through its security service, though the Pakistani government denies the claim. The Tali-

ban has split in recent months, with the insurgents divided over their support for a peace process.

The attack is the latest in a spate of violence since the start of 2016, which could be a tough year for Afghanistan as insurgents are expected to escalate the violence in order to enter into any peace negotiations from a position of strength.

During the first week of January a restaurant frequented by foreigners in Kabul and a contractor camp on the outskirts of the capital were attacked, and the Indian consulate in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif was besieged for more than 24 hours.

Further south, in Helmand province, the governor of Gereshk district in the poppy-growing river valley, said that nine police were killed overnight Tuesday in a Taliban assault. Mohammad Ashraf said two others were wounded. He had no further details.

Helmand has seen fierce fighting between Taliban and government forces in recent months. Helmand is the source of opium that produces most of the world's heroin and provides an important funding source for the insurgency. (AP)

(13) Media Commission ...

the financial sources of media outlets as part of their duties.

Members of the commission said they are independent and their main goal is to support freedom of speech and the rights of journalists. This comes after at least 95 incidents of violence against journalists in Afghanistan were reported last year. (Tolonews)

(14) Afghanistan...

to such tests. "The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan together with the International Community wants such tests to stop and considers North Korea's return to the negotiation table the only wise way towards the assurance of peace and stability," the statement added. (KP)

(15) Bamyan's Cave...

abodes. For nearly, three centuries, the Buddhists lived in the caves.

Looking the excruciating living conditions, one could not escape the feeling that the hapless individuals are stuck in a time warp, isolated from the modern-day world. To them, hand-to-mouth living is more than a luxury.

Braving subzero winter temperatures and other day-to-day privations, the cave residents do not have blankets -- much less other home appliances. Starvation, illiteracy and backwardness appear to be their destiny.

Dawlat Hussain, a troglodyte who has to support an eight-member family, calls survival his biggest challenge. Faced with perennial food shortages, his children happily eat dried bread and discarded eatables.

"I personally visit restaurants and ask for bread. I tell restaurant managers the leftover food is meant for feeding domestic animals. In fact, it is consumed by my children," he tells Pajhwok Afghan News.

There is no work to do in the dust-blown town. By chance, however, you can be hired as a daily wagger for a day or two.

A cavewoman, introducing herself as the mother of Mehdi, peels timber for 50 to 100 afghanis a day in the spring. She has been supporting her three children since her husband's death a decade ago.

The winter is pretty harsh for her family, as the cave is uncomfortably cold. Her children struggle to collect firewood to heat their abode. Hussain Dad Ahmadi, a Bamyan-based civil society leader, acknowledges the situation of cave dwellers is terrible. He wants the government to urgently alleviate their plight on a priority basis.

Unemployment is on the rise in the country, where educated and qualified individuals can hardly find jobs. Subsequently, the population of cave inhabitants is increasing. No one would like to live in a cave, he says.

Mohammad Hassan Asadi, a member of the provincial council, confirms thousands of Bamyan youth have migrated to European countries due to growing unemployment and poverty. (Pajhwok)

(16) 5 Militants...

last until the militants are eliminated in the area to ensure lasting peace there, he added.

Taliban militants who intensified activities with the herald of new year, are yet to make comment. (Xinhua)

(17) Return Refugees...

people are deported by Iranian border forces at Islam Qala on a daily

basis.

"Every day between 300 and 500 people are deported from the Iranian border - sometimes there are less - but we provide food and their transfer to Herat city," said Qadiri. But with the onset of winter, and temperatures dropping, the trip for migrants from Afghanistan overland is becoming more difficult. Those who have returned home speak of their ordeal. "Many who are going to Europe illegally drown, die or are deported back. But the government must provide jobs for the people so they are not forced to leave the country," said one return refugee Azimullah. (Tolonews)

(18) Helmand Suicide...

been the local police headquarters but the driver, a suicide bomber, was stopped by police before he reached his target - which was only a few meters away.

When stopped the suicide bomber detonated his explosives. (Tolonews)

(19) Police Kill 4...

worsened in recent months, with the Taliban radical movement and other extremist organizations such as Daesh (Islamic State), which is outlawed in Russia, conducting offensives on the country's largest cities. (Sputnik)

(20) Security Forces...

move toward security forces in the city center in order to evacuate them to safe areas.

During the cease-fire, which ended in the first hours of Wednesday, more than 250 civilians were evacuated, including seven wounded people who were shot by IS militants in an attempt to prevent them from leaving their homes. (Xinhua)

(21) Denmark ...

risk to public order and internal security because a large number of illegal immigrants may be stranded in the Copenhagen area. "Since Denmark's decision to temporarily reintroduce border controls, the number of immigrants crossing the EU's southern borders and continuing their journey further north is still very high," the minister said. (Xinhua)

(22) Turkish Army...

Turkish state and the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan.

The PKK, which has thus far claimed the lives of over 40,000 individuals, is firmly recognized as a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. (Xinhua)

(23) EU Provides

Union has been continuously providing support to the UNHCR's activities for the refugees from Bhutan since 1994. "We are extremely grateful to the EU for this generous contribution. (Xinhua)

(24) EU Opens ...

may be slipping. "Poland is an extremely important member state," Timmermans said, but he has insisted that it also is up to the EU to make sure that the fundamentals of the bloc are respected throughout the EU.

Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister Konrad Szymanski said in Brussels that criticism of Poland was "beyond proportions," while the EU Commission risked being "perceived as not impartial." (AP)

(25) Hamas Warns ...

was killed on Wednesday morning is a member in Fatah armed wing al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, adding that he was killed as several Israeli armored vehicles and bulldozers carried out an incursion into the area. (Xinhua)

(26) Syrian Troops ...

military since Russia began airstrikes in the country last September to shore up President Bashar Assad's forces.

On Wednesday, government troops seized the villages of Mrounyah and MarjKawkah near Salma as they continued their advances in the region, aided by intense Russian airstrikes. (AP)

(27) UN Seeks ...

Plan (HRP) for Somalia. According to OCHA, the El Nino phenomenon, which affected some 145,000 people in 2015, has also exacerbated the humanitarian situation.

"The HRP is requesting for 885 million dollars to reach 3.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, while at the same time linking humanitarian action and durable solutions," the statement said. (Xinhua)