

Quote of the Day

With every civil right there has to be a corresponding civil obligation.

Edison Haines

Aid Groups Need \$550 Million to Confront Worsening Afghan Crisis: UN

KABUL - International aid groups need more than a half a billion dollars this year to help millions of Afghans struggling with increased violence and a bleak economy, as a humanitarian crisis worsens, a senior U.N. official told Reuters. The United Nations estimates at least 9.3 million Afghans, or nearly a third of the population, will need humanitarian assistance in 2017, a 13 percent increase from last year. Officials expect hundreds of thousands of refugees to return from Pakistan and Iran this year, even as an average of 1,500 people are newly displaced by fighting every day, said Mark Bowden, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Afghanistan.

"The majority of people returning are very poor ... and have lost a lot," he said on Wednesday in an interview at his office in Kabul.



An increasing number of people in Afghanistan are facing prolonged displacement, Bowden said, creating more

challenges for the government, which is already struggling to provide basic services while battling a stubborn insurgency waged by the Taliban and other militant groups.

The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan, set to be launched by the United Nations and other organizations on Saturday, calls for \$550 million to help about 5.7 million of the most

vulnerable people. Such funding requests routinely only meet a fraction of the target, with \$197 million received for last year's annual request of \$339 million. An additional emergency appeal last year for \$152 million to help more than a million refugees returning from Pakistan and Iran, as well as people newly displaced by fighting, raised just over \$91 million.

"The major impact is that we're not able to address the needs of displaced people as adequately as we want," Bowden said. Afghanistan remains heavily dependent on foreign aid, and the prolonged conflict has kept most private investment away, with disastrous effects for the economy, he said. Prior to the U.S.-led international military force withdrawal ... (More on P4)...(1)

Pakistan wants Afghan Leaders to Review 'Fragmented' Approach to Taliban Peace Talks



ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has called on Afghan leaders to review their "fragmented" approach to peace talks with the Taliban on containing and ending the resilient insurgency, instead of blaming Islamabad for the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan. Sartaj Aziz, chief foreign policy advisor to the Pakistani prime minister, in an exclusive interview with VOA, says that a lack of political consensus and prevailing ambiguity in Afghanistan about whether to treat Taliban insurgents as terrorists or

stakeholders in national politics has blocked internationally-backed efforts to start peace talks between warring Afghan sides. "Their approach to talks with the Taliban is very, very fragmented. We want the (Afghan) government of national unity to succeed, to establish its writ, we want them to send a clear signal to the Taliban and other groups that the whole world wants them (insurgents) to talk (to Kabul) and solve the problem because nobody wants fighting in ... (More on P4)...(2)

Al-Qaeda Threat in Af-Pak Region Persists: White House

WASHINGTON - Even as the strength of Taliban and Al Qaeda has been diminished to a large extent, the situation in Afghanistan continues to be of concern, the outgoing Obama administration said on Tuesday.

"The situation in Afghanistan continues to be one of concern and I think the president would acknowledge that this is an area where we've made important progress that has made the American people safer," the White House press secretary said.

Josh Earnest told reporters at his last daily news conference there was still important work to be done in that region of the

world - a responsibility the incoming president would assume.

Afghanistan, he acknowledged, was the kind of issue that historians spent a lot of time looking at when evaluating Obama's presidency.

"What President Obama promised to do when taking office was to refocus our attention on the threat from Al Qaeda that emanates in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region," he recalled. Obama put in place a strategy, working closely with his national security team at the State Department and the intelligence community, and of course the Department of Defense,



the spokesman added. The US partly succeeded in decimating core Al-Qaida that previously menaced it from hideouts in the Afghanistan-

Pakistan region, he said, adding the accomplishment had made the American people safer. But the threat in that region ... (More on P4)...(3)

Afghan Forces were Tested and Prevailed in 2016: Nicholson

WASHINGTON - The commander of US and NATO troops in Afghanistan said that the Afghan national security forces were tested in 2016 and they prevailed.

"It was an important year for us. We began the year with a peace process. The Taliban and others admitted to joining the quadrilateral peace process," Gen John Nicholson said.

Four or five meetings were held, where Pakistani leaders promised to deliver, he recalled, saying the Taliban declared all of a sudden in April to launch an offensive against the Afghan government.

After a series of suicide attacks hit Kabul and other parts of the country, the Afghan government and security forces had to get down to business and then went hard



after the Taliban. "Also from the US side, the American troops sought permission of President Barack Obama to kill Mullah Mansoor and we killed him," he said.

Nicholson was speaking at an event at the Afghan embassy to present the inaugural "Veteran Ambassador Award" to Michael G Waltz, former commander of US Special

Forces and advisor for South Asia to Vice President Dick Cheney. It is for the first time that the government of Afghanistan has instituted such an award. Afghan Ambassador Hamdullah Mohib said it would be presented to an Afghan veteran every year. "I am humbled by this prestigious award," Nicholson said the ... (More on P4)...(4)

MUDH Officials Hold Blood Donation for Afghan Forces, Recent Terror Attacks



KABUL - A blood donation campaign was held in the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH) to help the victims of the recent terrorist attacks.

The campaign was also held to offer a Resolute Support to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).

The Minister of Urban Development and Housing Syed Sadat Mansoor Naderi participated in the campaign along with the other high level officials of the Ministry.

Minister Naderi said the main objective of the campaign was to show a Resolute Support to the Afghan forces and assist those injured in Kabul, Kandahar, and Helmand attacks.

Calling blood donation a humanitarian and Islamic obligation, Minister Naderi emphasized that each and

every citizen of the country should participate in campaigns to donate blood.

Afghanistan was rocked by a series of deadly attacks last week as the Taliban group unleashed its major attacks in key cities of the country including Kabul.

At least 38 people were killed and dozens of others were wounded in Kabul attack which was carried out in the form of a coordinated bombing close to the Afghan parliament building.

Around 12 others including 5 UAE diplomats and several other Afghan officials were killed after explosives planted in government's guesthouse was detonated over a week ago.

The UAE Ambassador to Afghanistan and Kandahar governor were also wounded in the attack for which no group has so far claimed responsibility. (KP)

Etisalat Mhawala Signs Agreement with OXUS Afghanistan



KABUL - Etisalat mHwala and OXUS Afghanistan, an affiliate of OXUS Development Network, signed a partnership agreement to further enhance OXUS' lending and loan collection process using mHawala services. The partnership will allow OXUS customers to disburse their loan installments via Etisalat mHawala at any Etisalat mHawala agent across the country from the comfort of their homes and without having to travel or spend time in long queues.

"In addition to paying for goods and services, mHawala customers can now pay their loans from their mobile phones. This helps reduce the need for physical cash and allow customers settle their

loans at any time and place," said Dr. Ali Azgharzada, Etisalat mHawala CEO.

Etisalat mHawala currently offers mobile money and branchless banking services through its mobile platform and agent network in Afghanistan. The services include: cash-in and cash-out, person-to-person transfers, airtime top-up, balance inquiry, electricity bill payment transactions and now loan payments and repayments.

Today, an increasing number of people across the world use mobile money (mobile banking) to carry out their daily monetary transactions. Easy to use, convenient, reliable, secure and accessible are terms often related to this service by users. (PR)

Ties with Afghanistan to Grow Despite Attack: UAE

KABUL - The foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has assured a visiting Afghan delegation that the recent attack in southern Kandahar province will not affect relations between the two countries.

Five UAE diplomats were killed and its envoy to Afghanistan wounded in last week's bombing which took place inside a guesthouse at the governor's office. The UAE officials traveled to Kandahar to inaugurate an orphanage.

Headed by Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani the delegation met Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zaid Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday. Rabbani conveyed condolences to the UAE government and people over the killings.

He said the killing of UAE diplomats and Afghan officials in the attack showed terrorism was a common enemy and the barbaric act would not weaken the resolve of Afghanistan and the UAE in war on terrorism.

Rabbani assured his UAE counterpart the Afghan government was investigating the incident and would share with it the outcome.

Sheikh Abdullah hailed Afghanistan as a close friend of the UAE, saying the terrorist incident would not negatively impact relations between the two countries. (Pajhwok)

NUG, NATO and UAE to Probe Kandahar Suicide Attack

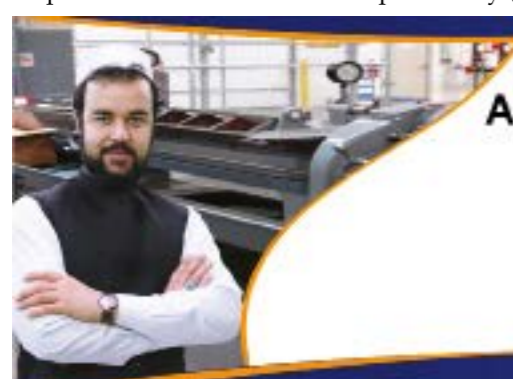


QANDAHAR CITY - The Afghan National Directorate of Security (NDS) said on Wednesday the National Unity Government (NUG), NATO and the United Arab Emirates will probe the suicide bombing last week at the Kandahar governor's guesthouse in which five UAE diplomats were killed.

In a statement released by the NDS, based on the orders of President Ashraf Ghani a joint delegation of Afghan security experts in collaboration with UAE research groups and international coalition forces led by NATO have started investigations into the Kandahar guesthouse suicide bombing.

According to initial investigations the attack was planned outside Afghanistan, NDS said. The suicide attack was plotted at a suicide training center called "Mawlawi Ahmad Qandahari" in the city of Quetta, Pakistan, the NDS said.

The blast occurred inside the Kandahar governor's high-security guesthouse where the UAE diplomats, including Ambassador Juma Mohammed Abdullah Al Kaabi, had gathered for ... (More on P4)...(5)



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