

(1) Leaders Defend...

the presence of women in the society and said that the National Unity Government has undertaken systematic programs aimed at supporting women of the country.

"We and the National Unity Government consider ourselves responsible towards implementing the aspirations of the people of Afghanistan and the demands of women of the country within the framework of the law," said Abdullah.

Ghani also highlighted the plights of Afghan women, saying the women in the country are still faced with poverty.

"The Afghan women will still remain deprived unless we focus on the poverty facing the Afghan women and include poverty alleviation in our key national objectives," said Ghani.

Minister of Women's Affairs Dilbar Nazari also spoke on the occasion and said the rights of Afghan women should be protected in the peace process with the armed opponents. "The women constitute half of the committed segment of the society. Their concerns need to be addressed and their representatives should have a dynamic role in the peace process," said Nazari.

The government leaders said that despite shortcomings, some "systematic" activities have been done under the National Unity Government towards increasing the presence of women in government institutions, providing them with educational opportunities and increasing their numbers in the ranks of the Afghan security forces.

This comes at a time that US Special Representative on Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad is holding backdoor talks with the Taliban officials in Doha, Qatar, in an attempt to facilitate direct talks between the Afghan government and the resurgent group aimed at ending the US's longest war. (Tolo news)

(2) Qatar Talks...

withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. Taliban has repeatedly insisted on an immediate withdrawal of foreign forces.

Other sources, meanwhile, said that Taliban has increased the duration of the timeline for foreign forces pullout. Taliban, however, has not commented on this.

"They have made an agreement on the foreign forces withdrawal," said Faiz Zaland, a political affairs analyst familiar with US-Taliban talks. "Now they (US and the Taliban) are discussing the issue that after the foreign forces' pullout, will Taliban be a threat against the region or not." Amid the ongoing talks, clashes are reported from different parts of the country between the Afghan forces and the Taliban.

"From one hand, we are busy with peace, and from the other hand, they (Taliban) want to damage government's legitimacy. Also, they (Taliban) will cause foreign forces to leave Afghanistan and Pakistan's pressure will decrease (against them). But Taliban's war machine will continue," said Rahmatullah Nabil, former head of the National Directorate of Security and a presidential candidate.

Some Kabul residents, meanwhile, said they are worried about the possible outcomes of the talks as according to them, the people are kept in the dark and the talks are ongoing behind the closed doors. "We should know what is ongoing behind the closed doors and what they are talking about," said Tania, a Kabul resident.

"The Afghan youth have not been given a role in the peace talks. They should be given a role and they can express their views," said Mina, a Kabul resident. Sources said the Doha talks will continue in the future and may enter to the sixth round.

According to the sources, both sides are confident that they will reach a final agreement, but the discussions on details of the agreements, have prolonged the talks.

Last week, the US Department of State said US and Taliban have agreed on four key interconnected issues that possibly will lead them to a final agreement that might bring

peace in Afghanistan.

The four key issues are counterterrorism, a ceasefire, foreign forces withdrawal and intra-Afghan talks. (Tolo news)

(3) Pakistan Resumes...

(Pakistani military) came to us from Pakistan and asked almost 3,000 to 4,000 families to leave the area. They (Pakistani military) said they are taking the area. They made the remarks and then started shelling on us," said Nazar Jan.

"There is no place for people to live in the area as all houses have been destroyed by the shelling. The rocket shelling (by Pakistani military) continues every day," said Dost Mohammad Mohmand, a resident of Lal Pur district said.

Lal Pur's District Governor Nematullah Nawrozi confirmed the rockets shelling on the bordering areas in the province and said it is a clear violation of Afghanistan's sovereignty.

"This is a clear violation of international laws. Pakistan has done this violation in the past and is still doing it," Nawrozi said.

In the letter to the UN Security Council, the Afghan government raised the issue of "consistent violations of Afghanistan's territory" by Pakistani forces and has called on the UN to initiate "necessary measures to address the matter at hand in an effective manner". (Tolo news)

(4) Timely, Inclusive...

President Ghani, assured his supporters that there will be no compromise on women's rights in peace talks with the Taliban.

According to him, peace is applicable only within the framework of the Afghan government. He assured that women's rights and other achievements of the country will not be compromised in the peace process.

Other politicians who attended the event said there is no chance of going back to the era of the Taliban.

"There are concerns that there is the possibility that we will return to the past... Women will not allow anyone to take us back to the past," said Fawzia Kofi, an MP.

(5) Civilians, Including...

from air attacks in 2018.

It said aerial bombardment killed 149 civilians and wounded more than 200 others in the first half of 2018, up 52 percent from the same period last year.

In Kunduz in April last year, an Afghan air attack on a religious gathering killed or wounded 107 people, mostly children, UNAMA said in its report on the incident.

The Afghan government and the military said the attack had targeted a Taliban base where senior members of the group were allegedly planning attacks.

Afghan forces are struggling to combat the Taliban, which holds sway over nearly half of the country and carries out daily attacks on security forces. (Aljazeera)

(6) Ancient Minaret...

Deputy Head of Herat's Information and Culture Directorate.

Amina Karimiyan, a civil engineer from Herat, said there is a need for construction of a tower near the minarets to protect them from destruction.

She said the minarets cannot be protected by steel cables.

Jailani Farhad, spokesman for Herat governor, said they have sought the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) help to protect the minarets.

"Some measures have been taken for protection of the fifth minaret but there is a need for international experts' help in this respect," he said. "Some activities have been done with the help of the UNESCO but the protection of the minarets require concrete measures."

The minaret, which is on the verge of destruction, is located near a wedding hall and an ancient mosque. Officials said it will destroy the two places if it falls. (Tolo news)

(7) Govt Asked...

flights between Afghanistan and India.

"We have not increased the tickets prices as much as our operational cost has increased. We are trying to

offer services to the people in any possible way," said Suleiman Omar, head of the commercial unit of Kam Air.

Critics called on the Afghan government to discuss the problem with Pakistani officials and resolve the issue based on the law of the International Civil Aviation Organization. Officials from the Independent Civil Aviation Authority said they are in contact with Pakistan civil aviation to address the problem.

"This issue relates to diplomatic relations, but we have not received anything from the Foreign Ministry in this regard. However, we are in contact with Pakistan civil aviation department in this regard," said Captain Ghulam Jilani, operational deputy head of the Civil Aviation Authority.

Kam Air officials said they will cancel Mazar-New Delhi flights due to their high cost if the situation prevails. (Tolo news)

(8) 5,900 People...

"In Afghanistan it is moving on the right direction, however, more collective and consulted efforts have to be done and it has to be done," Merlyn, a representative from WHO said.

According to MoPH, currently, 4.4 percent of the addicts injects drugs into their bodies which transfer AIDS virus from one person to another one. The officials said in the last 10 years they have prevented the increase of injections among the addicts to prevent an increase of HIV disease.

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is one of the world's most serious public health challenges. But there a global commitment to stopping new HIV infections and ensuring that everyone living with HIV has access to HIV treatment.

According to the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS information on website of the organization, there were approximately 36.9 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS in 2017. Of these, 1.8 million were children (<15 years old).

An estimated 1.8 million individuals worldwide became newly infected with HIV in 2017 - about 5,000 new infections per day. This includes 180,000 children (<15 years). Most of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa and were infected by their HIV-positive mothers during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding. Approximately 75% of people living with HIV globally were aware of their HIV status in 2017. The remaining 25% (over 9 million people) still need access to HIV testing services. HIV testing is an essential gateway to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services. AIDS-related deaths have been reduced by more than 51% since the peak in 2004. In 2017, 940 000 people died from AIDS-related illnesses worldwide, compared to 1.4 million in 2010 and 1.9 million in 2004. (Tolo news)

Afghanistan has detained close relatives of Jaish-e-Mohammed's leader, Masood Azhar. Prime Minister Imran Khan declared on Friday that Islamabad "will not allow Pakistan's land to be used for any kind of outside terrorism."

The most recent strikes set off a tit-for-tat escalation that saw the much-publicized capture and prompt release of Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, as well as outbreaks of shooting and shelling along the heavily militarized border. (RT)

(16) Israel Hammers...

goes on inside the Gaza Strip, the IDF vowed to act "vigorously" against any attacks or provocation, a day after thousands of Palestinians marked the 50th week of the Great Return March protests.

Cross-border tensions along the border fence have witnessed an uptick ahead of the Knesset elections on April 9, prompting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to take a decisive stand this week. " Hamas must understand that [the IDF] will respond to any manifestation of aggression with double the force," the Prime Minister explained on Thursday, vowing a "very vigorous response" from Israel. (RT)

helping contain Central American migrant caravans while resisting U.S. efforts to oust the leftist government of Venezuela.

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(17) Mexico's Leftist...

percent. He has taken full advantage of that mandate to move quickly on many fronts - perhaps too many.

"Every week he announces at least one or two things," said Ivonne Acuna Murillo, a professor of political science at the Iberoamerican University in Mexico City. "Sometimes the speed of the issues he is putting on the agenda is such that an issue they put out in the morning is displaced by another in the afternoon."

Before Lopez Obrador had even taken office he held a referendum on the partially constructed \$13 billion Mexico City airport. He used the resulting vote as a green light to cancel a project he had campaigned against. During his first month in office, Lopez Obrador launched a military assault on the country's fuel theft gangs, dividing the security of Mexico's critical pipelines and refineries between the army and the navy. The hastily planned offensive created gas shortages across the country, but somehow didn't dampen his popularity.

This month, he overrode complaints by human rights campaigners and got the Congress and state legislatures to approve constitutional reforms creating a heavily militarized National Guard that he touts as the key to getting control of Mexico's runaway violence.

A typical day starts with his 6 a.m. Cabinet meeting, focusing on security, where he gets the daily crime report. At 7 a.m., he steps on the dais at the centuries-old National Palace to start a free-wheeling, open-ended press conference that often goes for 1 1/2 hours.

From there he might hold a meeting on the initiative of the day, and then around noon he flies off - tourist class, fielding hugs and taking selfies with fellow passengers - to some provincial city, where he'll meet with local leaders, eat at some modest local cafeteria, then hold another open-air rally and take some more hugs. Then he'll catch another tourist-class flight to Mexico City. (He says he gets to bed early).

The part of the day he most clearly enjoys? Pressing the flesh and handing out time-tested one-liners at rallies in provincial towns - essentially, the same thing he has been doing for the last 20 years on the campaign trail as a three-time presidential contender.

"He is a bit messianic, meaning evangelical. He's out there preaching all the time," said Federico Estevez, a political science professor at the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico. "He's Bernie Sanders with power." (AP)

like UNHCR are present and can observe the return, can have access to the returnees and can help them address some of the problems they face," Grandi said in Beirut, as the Syrian conflict approaches its eighth anniversary next week.

"Without that presence there is an element of confidence that is missing in the return of the people," he added.

Syria's war has killed an estimated half a million people, driven some 5.6 million people out of the country and displaced around 6.6 million within its borders.

Grandi said there are "big challenges" preventing people from returning to their homes including security, legal and administrative issues, housing, schools, water and health care.

He said UNHCR was working with the Syrian government and its Russian ally on these matters.

"The complicated one like legal issues and amnesties, these are Syrian issues the Syrian government decides. But the Russian government has been part of an important discussion creating better conditions for refugees to return," Grandi said.

Grandi, who was in Lebanon after spending three days in Syria, said he had passed a "very strong message" about UNHCR access to the Syrian government. (Reuters)

A no-man's land of about 200m separates SDF positions from the Islamic State frontline at Baghouz, a collection of hamlets and farmland near the border with Iraq. (Reuters)

and missile defenses, with the Syrian war still unfolding on its borders and following the 2016 military coup attempt, are vital to its national security. Ankara had mulled the purchase of the US-made Patriot systems, but Russia offered better terms with no strings attached for its superior S-400 - an offer the client could not refuse.

The US continues to threaten Turkey with consequences in the form of various sanctions if it goes ahead with the \$2.5 billion Russian deal. Washington sees the Russian system as a potential threat to its own weapons, particularly the F-35, insisting that NATO members should only purchase from within the bloc, to maintain 'interoperability.'

While the S-400/F-35 row goes on, Ankara and Washington are also trying to work out their disagreements over the Syrian Kurds, whom Turkey considers terrorists, but whom the US has been arming for years. At the same time, Turkey, along with Russia and Iran, is a guarantor of the ceasefire in Syria, which has been successfully implemented in several areas throughout the country. (RT)

"About two I will tell you, but won't tell you about the third one."

The third strike may refer to an alleged 2017 Indian Army action that Indian journalist Shiv Aroor said had killed three Pakistani soldiers. The army did not confirm or deny the attack at the time.

In each of the acknowledged cases, Indian forces targeted the militants of the Jaish-e-Mohammed terror group. India has accused the Pakistani government of aiding and abetting terrorism, and has cautioned its nuclear-armed neighbor that supporting terrorism will not be tolerated.

"The country will not provoke anyone, but will not leave anyone if provoked," he said.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has detained close relatives of Jaish-e-Mohammed's leader, Masood Azhar. Prime Minister Imran Khan declared on Friday that Islamabad "will not allow Pakistan's land to be used for any kind of outside terrorism."

The most recent strikes set off a tit-for-tat escalation that saw the much-publicized capture and prompt release of Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, as well as outbreaks of shooting and shelling along the heavily militarized border. (RT)

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