

(1) Trump Discusses...

This comes after the US Department of State said on Wednesday that the Taliban in talks with the US negotiators made meaningful progress in Qatar talks.

"We've received reports back from Special Representative Khalilzad that they've had meaningful progress," Robert Palladino, the State Department's deputy spokesperson, told reporters at a daily briefing in Washington on Tuesday.

He said that in the fresh round of talks, the two sides were able to move to agreement in draft on the first two principles. "In this round of talks, we were able to move to agreement in draft on the first two principles, counterterrorism assurances and troop withdrawal. And when that agreement in draft is finalized, Taliban and an inclusive Afghan negotiating team that includes the Afghan government and other Afghans to begin intra-Afghan negotiation for a political settlement and a comprehensive ceasefire," he added.

Hours after the news broke on Qatar talks, US Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad said in a tweet that he wrapped up a marathon round of talks with Taliban in Doha.

Khalilzad said peace requires agreement on four issues: counterterrorism assurances, troop withdrawal, intra-Afghan dialogue, and a comprehensive ceasefire. (Tolo news)

(2) Candidates Doubt...

The election law says that the polls should be held using biometric system and voters list.

"The election commissions do not have the budget and the equipment. People have not trust in election commissions. Therefore, I want to say that July 20 does not seem a real timeline," said Yusuf Rasheed, the CEO of FEFA.

"There is no issue that we should say the presidential elections will delay, but in general, our workload will increase and this will create more workload for us," said Abdul Aziz Ibrahim, a spokesman for IEC.

This comes after new commissioners were appointed for the two election commissions – the Independent Election Commission and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission – in a bid to hold transparent and fair presidential elections. (Tolo news)

(3) Afghan Journalists...

Another reporter, Shakil Ahmad Saeed, called on government to take the threats seriously and address security challenges facing Afghan journalists and media workers.

"Putting pressure on media can be the only reason behind the kidnapping of the founder of Enekas Radio-TV network in the east," Saeed said.

The Khost journalist, Sultan Mahmood Khairkhwah, 60, was the fourth journalist killed in Afghanistan so far this year.

Last week, Nisar Ahmadi, a local TV journalist in Helmand, was wounded in an IED blast in Lashkargah city.

Shafiq Aria and Rahimullah Rahmani, local journalists in Takhar province in the north of Afghanistan, were killed in an attack by unknown armed men on their office in Taluqan city in February. Another journalist, Jawed Noori, was killed in armed men's attack in Farah province in January.

'Worst Country For Journalists In 2018' A report by the Kabul-based Journalists Safety Committee released in January shows that Afghanistan, with 120 cases of violence against journalists, has been ranked for the second time as the most dangerous country for journalists in 2018.

Security threats and lack of access to information continue to impede activities for reporting, the report says.

According to the report, Cases of violence against Afghan journalists in 2018 include 17 cases of murder and others mainly of beatings, intimidation and kidnapping.

The report says that 11 cases of violence were recorded against female journalists. Kabul was the most dangerous place for journalists with 42 cases of violence, according to the report. Despite challenges for the media in Afghanistan, 57 new media outlets began activities in the country during 2018, the report added.

Figures by Afghan government show that there are 96 TV channels, 65 radio stations and 911 print media in Kabul,

as well as 107 TV channels, 284 radio stations and 416 print media in other provinces.

The First Vice President Mohammad Sarwar Danish said last month that there are 1,879 active media outlets in Afghanistan. He said the freedom of the press and the media are the main achievements of Afghanistan in the past 18 years and that they will not be ignored in the peace process. (Tolo news)

(4) Mohib All Praise...

of an transparent, and just peace.

"I would particularly caution the Afghan presidential hopefuls to exercise restraint and not to end up on the wrong side of history. The country will judge you on how you treat your own (people), not on what you do for others," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(5) Security Council...

come to a consensus on the resolution renewing the mission's mandate for the full one year," US Deputy Representative Jonathan Cohen said.

He blamed China for what he called golding the resolution hostage. Cohen said the Security Council had to accept the short-term technical rollover and expressed the willingness to reconvene after the six months to prolong the mandate.

On the other hand, Chinese Ambassador Ma Zhaoxu said the Security Council could not come to consensus because of differences on the principles of extending UNAMA's mandate. (Pajhwok)

(6) Kabul Summons...

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(7) Afghanistan Determined...

German Ambassador Christoph Heusgen underlined the urgent need for progress on an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.

Issues irrelevant to UNAMA's mandate surfaced and blocked the approval of the resolution they had drafted, he said.

"This six-month extension does not mean the international community is not united in support to Afghanistan."

Stephen Hickey of Britain also regretted over the Security Council's inability to adopt a more comprehensive resolution, with a 12-month mandate renewal. (Pajhwok)

(8) US, China...

environmental damage, and lack of transparency."

China's deputy ambassador Wu Haitao countered that Cohen's remarks were "at variance with the facts and are fraught with prejudice." He also said one council member – almost certainly referring to the U.S. – "poisoned the atmosphere" which led to the council's failure to adopt a substantive resolution.

Wu noted that since the "belt and road" initiative was launched six years ago, 123 countries and 29 international organizations have signed agreements of cooperation with China on joint development programs. "The 'belt and road' initiative is conducive to Afghanistan's reconstruction and economic development," Wu said. "Under this framework, China and Afghanistan will continue to strengthen cooperation in various fields, promote

economic and social development in the country and the integration of Afghanistan into regional development."

He stressed that the program "has nothing to do with geopolitics."

Germany's U.N. Ambassador Christoph Heusgen, who drafted the resolution with Indonesia's U.N. Ambassador Dian Djani, expressed regret that "issues that have nothing to do" with the work of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan made it impossible to adopt a substantive resolution.

"We very much regret that such topics as the upcoming elections (in Afghanistan), the participation of women in the Afghan peace process, the situation of children in armed conflict, the nexus between climate change and security, are no longer reflected in this resolution," Heusgen said. The resolution does extend UNAMA's mission until Sept. 17, 2019 and stresses "the central importance of a comprehensive and inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political process towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict and a comprehensive political settlement." And it welcomes "progress in this regard."

But Heusgen said the text isn't satisfactory to any of the 15 council members.

He expressed hope that in the next six months the U.N.'s most powerful body would be able to overcome its differences and adopt a resolution that also reflects on the peace process and the upcoming elections. (AP)

(9) ADB to Fund...

Meanwhile, some experts said the implementation of infrastructure projects in the country is crucial for improving the supply of public services.

"The existence of electricity, roads, access water, and human resources can provide a better basis for the country's economic growth," said Qais Mohammadi a university lecturer. (Tolo news)

(10) Daudzai Off to...

steps taken by any country toward the peace process will be remembered by the Afghan nation. No country should purse vested interests in the Afghan conflict," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(11) 'Afghanistan Not...

an elected political structure should remain there.

The political structure should not be an interim administration since it is not constitutionally mandated nor it has the public endorsement and called the structure should be an elected political structure in Afghanistan.

India has been engaging inside Afghanistan and with the neighbouring countries –Iran, Central Asia, Russia and Saudi Arabia on the peace process in the south Asian country. India's official policy on the Afghan peace process is that it should be "Afghan-owned, Afghan-led and Afghan-controlled".

India last year participated at "unofficial level" at Moscow format talks by sending its former ambassador to Afghanistan Amar Sinha and former Indian high commissioner to Pakistan TCA Raghavan. (Pajhwok)

(12) 40 Years after...

on the Al Noor and Linwood mosques - the worst mass shooting in the country's modern history

As several victims remained in hospital, including a four-year-old in critical condition, Tarrant appeared unrepentant in court on Saturday, staring down media members with a smirk.

He was charged with murder and remanded without a plea. His next appearance in the South Island city's High Court will take place on April 5. Nabi is survived by four sons, one daughter and nine grandchildren who he loved "intensely", said Omar.

"His grandchildren really miss him and some of them don't even know that he is no more with us.

"This is a very difficult time for us and for everyone who lost their loved ones in this massacre."

Just two days ago, Nabi spoke of the importance of unity.

"My father said how important it is to spread love and unity among each other and protect every member of the society we live in," Omar said. He also spoke with poignancy about the end of his own life in a comment that is now ringing in Omar's mind.

"He said the best place to pass away was during Friday prayers in a mosque."

Some Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad said there is virtue in dying on a Friday, Islam's holiest day.

As victims grieve, the world is rallying around them with messages of support and fundraising.

A crowdfunding page has gathered almost \$1m for the affected families. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah condemned the massacres in separate statements.

"Terrorist attacks on the mosques (in New Zealand) once again showed that terrorists are not dependent to any religion and they are the enemies of humanity," Ghani said in the statement. Wahidullah Waissi, Afghanistan's ambassador to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji said on Twitter that two Afghans were killed in the attack. (Ajazeera)

(13) Myredline'...

#MyRedLine, a campaign by Farahnaz Forotan, supported by UN Women Afghanistan, is an expression by Afghan citizens of the human rights and women's human rights, which they will not give up and, which, they as citizens, will not negotiate.

The campaign is built on a series of testimonies where people voice the lines they are not willing to cross, be it the right to work, to drive, to marry whom they chose, to walk in the streets, to go to school, to stand to be President of the nation – their 'red line'.

Farahnaz Forotan, Tolo news journalist and #MyRedLine Campaign Ambassador stated: As a journalist, I am privileged to listen to what people have to say, to know what matters to them, to understand what they need. And from this privileged position I can say that the Afghan citizens want a peace they can all enjoy. And this is how this campaign "MyRedLine" came about.

#MyRedLine brings in Afghans from all walks of life, from prominent Afghan citizens, to women and men, young and old, of every ethnicity, from cities, towns and villages across the nation.

As Farahnaz continues: #MyRedLine starts a movement where every citizen of this country can say freely and openly how going back to the times when women were oppressed and humiliated is not an option for them, and it will not be an option for a peaceful Afghanistan.

Aleta Miller, UN Women Country Representative in Afghanistan, emphasized: Now more than ever is the time to set the foundations on which the future of a peaceful Afghanistan is being built. And this future is being built with women like Farahnaz standing for their rights, for their right to study, for their right to vote, for their right to have an opinion, for their right to express freely which lines they are not willing to cross. #MyRedLine is about the expression of the voice of Afghan women and men to each other and to the world on the peace they so desperately desire.

Globally, UN Women supports women at all levels of society who create movements to uplift women's voices, experiences, and expertise to create structural and systematic change across all layers of society.

Now more than ever, unprecedented momentum is being built as women in Afghanistan gather in local, national, regional and international forums to articulate their priorities for peace and concrete recommendations for the way forward on justice, security, and all issues related to building and sustaining peace. It is in this context that UN Women is working with women's civil society organizations and leaders to ensure that not only are women's voices heard, but their recommendations and priorities influence all decisions regarding the future of Afghanistan.

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. www.unwomen.org (Pajhwok)

(14) Striking Money...

their lives ere in danger. He also demanded severe punishment for the murderers of Mahsa. (Pajhwok)

(15) New Zealand PM...

who said that the gunman was confronted by a mosque caretaker, who wrestled one of his guns away but did

not shoot because he "couldn't find the trigger."

Currently, New Zealand restricts the purchase of "military-style semi-automatic weapons" to those 18 or older. The minimum legal age to buy a firearm is 16. Anyone the police consider to be "fit and proper" can get a firearms license – provided they pass a background check involving criminal and medical records. Registration of individual weapons is not required. (RT)

(16) Australian Senator...

The government and opposition party agreed to pass a censure motion against Anning over his stance on the Christchurch shootings when Parliament resumes in April. (Fox News)

(17) Thousands of Albanian...

Albania hopes to get the EU's approval in June on launching membership negotiations. (Fox News)

(18) 'Unhinged...

waterway that separates mainland Russia from Crimea in a "stealthy" manner.

On Friday, Washington imposed sanctions on six businessmen and politicians, and eight enterprises, while Ottawa slapped economic restrictions on 114 individuals and 15 entities. The Foreign Ministry specifically took aim at Canada for racing to keep up with the US' Russia-bashing.

"It seems that from a normal logic standpoint, it would be more important for [Canadian Prime Minister Justin] Trudeau's team to concentrate on resolving rather complex problems at home, than play its 'Russophobia card' in vain."

Both US and Canada continue to follow a "perilous course" aimed at a "total destruction" of relations with Russia, already at rock bottom due to the "unhinged Russophobia that has engulfed Washington and Ottawa," the ministry said.

Moscow has vowed to mount a "practical response" to the new sanctions.

Shipyards based in St. Petersburg and Crimea, and Russian officials that responded to the incident in the Kerch Strait are among those included in Washington's black list. Canada also targeted prominent Russian politicians and business executives, such as the head of Russian oil giant Rosneft, Igor Sechin, and the head of the National Guard, Victor Zolotov.

Russian aluminum tycoon Oleg Deripaska, who was sanctioned by the US last year, is meanwhile taking the US government to court, arguing that the restrictions are based "on false rumor and innuendo" and violate the US Constitution.

Deripaska was forced to lower his stake in aluminum giant Rusal to spare it from sanctions, but sanctions targeting him personally remain in place. (RT)

(19) Dissident Group...

media, with Spanish outlets El Pais and El Confidencial reporting that police now believe that at least two of the attackers were connected to the CIA.

The reports were received with a grain of salt by the mainstream media, reported cautiously by most and outright rejected by some. Yahoo called the allegations "unlikely" while citing former CIA officials. The senior editor at the Diplomat, Akit Panda, came out in the CIA's defense on Twitter.

Amid concerns that the reported raid by the CIA might drive a wedge between Washington and Madrid and derail the negotiations between North Korea and the US, already reportedly on the brink of collapse, the Washington Post reported on Friday that the operation was conducted by a "secretive dissident organization." The attackers supposedly have a video of the raid and can release it "anytime."

The organization, Cheollima Civil Defense, did not claim responsibility for the incident, despite being open about its less high-profile stunts, such as defacing the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur on Monday. The Post cited people "familiar with the planning and execution of the mission" in its report, supported by opinions of several experts, including former CIA analyst Sue Mi Terry.

"This is not something the CIA would undertake," she said. (RT)